TIME AND ETERNITY

By

DR. FREDERICK ROTHWELL DEAN

A STUDY IN ESCHATOLOGY

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A Study in Eschatology

By

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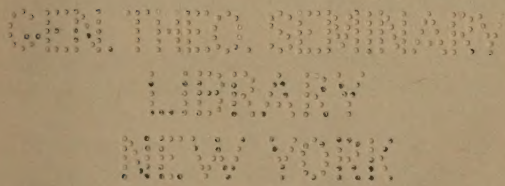

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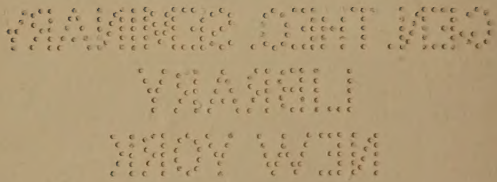

PREFACE

THE main object in writing such a book as this is to place within a reasonable compass most, if not all, of what may be legitimately believed in, of the life which man must encounter outside the confines of this world.

It is no ordinary study of the 'Intermediate Life,' though that naturally finds its place within these pages; but it embraces a much wider sphere.

There are subjects which include historical events of a mystical nature, immaterial existences which can only be spiritually discerned, and the presentation of the Will of God, so as to mark its unity with the modern conclusions of philosophic and scientific thought.

During the last generation much has been written on the nearer 'Hereafter,' but even here very little can wholly survive in every detail the searching tests of true Catholic theology or the inexorable logic of the reasoner.

Some of the conclusions arrived at in this volume are strangely at variance with what is commonly understood to be the truth. But a popular theology is nearly always wrong, because it is never built upon the two foundation rocks of Evidence and Reason.

Only let the reader peruse these pages with the spirit of a 'seeker after truth,' without prejudice and bias, and he will find a wonderful harmony in God's Purpose, not only towards Man, but towards Spirit, in that extensive universe wherein His Power is exercised.

F. ROTHWELL DEAN.

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Time and Eternity

CHAPTER I

Life, Eternal Life, Church Militant

" Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live and is full of misery. He cometh up and is cut down like a flower ; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay." *

Such is Job's outline of man's earthly experience or life.

We are born of human parents into a temporal life, but as to the extent of that life we are quite unconscious. The newly-born child may have individually breathed, and its heart may have made a few involuntary beats, and then all may cease.

It is said to have lived, but only for a few seconds, and then to have died.

Suppose we were to look upon this subject as an abstract problem, with nothing to guide us in our reasoning ; we should probably come to the conclusion that there was no point in death following life so rapidly. There was a great and cruel waste.

Still more so as the child grew on. It might be

* Job xiv. 1, 2.

successful in life or not ; but does the end of life crown man's efforts as they deserve ? Everyone knows that that is far from being the case. The least worthy, too often, is abundantly bestowed with the favours of life, which the greater character can never hope to attain.

As a reasonable being, you are not unnaturally bewildered with the complexities of this mortal life, and wonder whether a God, whom you have always been taught is a God of order and discipline, can be responsible for so many irregularities.

We are bound to admit, that to speak to one whom the world has badly hit, and to argue with him on an entirely physical plane, will not bring you very much satisfaction. You can never from that particular point of view, bestow upon him any happiness ; and a few direct questions which spring from his own experience, will quickly reveal the inability of your reasoning.

We must therefore move our position. Are we merely what we seem to be ? Are there other beings in the world like us ?

Many of the higher animals are akin to us in physical formation, but the identity is complete when we study their chemical constitution. Would it be correct, then, to say that Man is an animal, the greatest and highest of all creatures, but nothing more ?

No. As we travel down the scale of humanity from the highest to the lowest, we are at last brought to species of aboriginal tribes, when it is extremely difficult to say whether they are man or beast. There is, however, one undoubted test. Do these creatures shew the least inclination to worship ? If so, however rude and depraved that worship may be, the creature is a man. A true animal lives essentially for this

world. A true man regards his temporal life as but a step, which leads him onwards and upwards.

It would therefore appear that although man and the lower creation have many points in common, there are also innumerable points of difference, as would agree with that infinite diversity which separates the final destiny of the man and of the beast.

The constitution of man is tripartite—body, soul, and spirit. Many people contend that at least some of the higher animals have souls. The probability is that all have souls, animal souls, situated in the brain, and which govern the actions of the body, but this phenomenon must in no case be mistaken for the spiritual soul and spirit, by means of which man, and man alone, comes into communion with God. It was S. Paul, more than any other writer in the New Testament, who insisted on the tripartite nature of man being fully recognised. Without this great apostle, we should probably have thought that man consisted of body and soul—not the animal soul of a beast, but a spiritual entity.

Unless we are extremely cautious in our nomenclature, we often find ourselves interchanging the meaning of the two words, 'soul' and 'spirit.' It is often done in the Bible. When we read of the Creation of Man, we are told that God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life and he became '*a living soul.*'* But when our Blessed Lord died upon the Cross, he cried aloud, '*Father, into Thy Hands I commend my Spirit,*' † There is not the slightest mistake made in the two references, but they need an explanation.

The 'living soul' of Creation means the true 'soul' or 'ego' of the man vivified by a spirit—a gift of

* Gen. ii. 7. † S. Luke xxiii. 46.

God's Holy Spirit. This spirit is attached to the soul, possibly as an encasement, just as the body is to the soul.

When, therefore, our Lord spoke about ' commending His Spirit,' he included within that word everything except His non-corruptible body which passed to the grave.

We therefore see in what way body, soul and spirit must act towards each other if life is to be harmonious, both here and hereafter.

Man cannot live in this world without his tripartite nature. For the body to lose the soul and spirit, means death and corruption to the former—the *first* death. For the soul to be separated from the spirit means the condition known as Gehenna or Hell, which eventually terminates in the *second* death. The spirit once more joins God.

' *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was ; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*' * The foregoing paragraph obviously needs more explanation than has at present been given to it, but the subject will receive due consideration in its proper place.

Hitherto, it has been thought necessary to examine into man's constitution, because it is impossible to proceed and understand his course of life, until we are definitely secure in our minds upon that point.

In an early part of the chapter, we clearly recognised that the earthly life had many faults—this life lived in the body.

The world is unjust, immoral, and selfish ; and if this were the only vision to which we could look forward, it could hardly be regarded as entrancing. But even on this earthly plane, we are already living two

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* Eccl. xii. 7.

separate and distinct lives—the material and the spiritual. Very soon after birth the child of true Christian parents is brought to the church to be baptised. This is done for three reasons, as is shewn in the Church's catechism. Through that baptism, the child is made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven. Let us see what these gifts mean.

A member of Christ, a member of Christ's Body, a Christian; and Christ's Body, as S. Paul states, is His Church. This Church is the Holy Catholic Church of the Creeds. Thus a person baptised, in addition to being a Christian, is also a Holy Catholic Churchman, whether he knows it or not. He further has a right to most of the Church's blessings because of his membership. With the Cross of Christ marked out upon his brow by the consecrated water of the Font, he may claim, at the hands of the Church's ministers, the ordinances of matrimony, burial, and even the Sacrament of Holy Communion, after Confirmation. Holy Baptism opens out the Church's gates for every God-given favour, for which she is the Depository; and it is only by the reception of these spiritual gifts that the spirit of man grows and fulfils the purpose mapped out for it, in the Oracles of God.

It will be seen, then, that inasmuch as the acceptance of Holy Baptism, nominally makes of man a Christian, it in no case claims for that man an inheritance of goodness. Many difficulties arising out of the practical application of Christianity are thus overcome, if we keep that point in view.

The Church attends to the services of her members—Christians. However great the holiness exhibited in the character of an unbaptised person, that person has no right to plead for Christian recognition and

service on the score of holiness. And the Church, in her consistency, refuses the comfort of her Lord to those who wilfully and persistently remain unbaptised.

Now the title of this Church, to which we are introduced at Baptism, is not only Catholic, but it is named the Militant Church on earth. In other words, all who are baptised must fight against sin and temptation —the weapons of Satan, whose sole object is the capture of the souls of men. The warfare is a continuous one, and an unequal one, were it not for the Divine Spirit of God, which sustains and strengthens man's spirit, to conquer in the day of victory.

In addition, however, to becoming 'members of Christ' at our baptism, we are also made 'the children of God.'

At our birth, we were brought into the world contaminated and stained with the sins of our parents. We had never committed any wilful sin in infancy, but the inherited sin of our parents, the original or birth sin, as it is called, left its mark upon our souls.

This taint must be cleansed. From being children of wrath, we must become the children of grace. A new birth, a regeneration had to take place, and this was effected through the waters of the Font. The child of natural birth, a child of wrath, was by this Divine process transformed into an adopted child of grace.*

Lastly, the child by this Sacrament of Baptism becomes 'an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.' Very often when this expression is used in the New Testament it simply means the Militant Church of Christ. But here, there can be no possible doubt as to its meaning, the riches of God's blessings. The child

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* Coll. for Christmas Day, and S. John iii.

in Holy Baptism is made an heir of all these gifts, with which the Militant Church of Christ is so wonderfully endowed; but the child must shew just such a condition of soul, of spiritual character, as to receive the gifts when offered. If God puts forth His benevolent Hand, preparations must be made within the heart to make it capable of spiritual absorption. God cannot give without some human response.

Those who are baptised must therefore continually practise such religious exercises as repentance of sin, faith in God, and obedience to God and man. They are then fulfilling their part of the contract in the scheme of Salvation. Their souls are suffused with spiritual health, their feet are placed upon that narrow path which passes not only through this earthly life, but beyond the river of death, through the intermediate life, even into the life of endless bliss.

It is now that the soul begins to realise the enormous difficulty of keeping safely upon that narrow track.

The temptations of Satan are so very subtle that they bring about many downfalls, but the Christian's inspiration is surely to be found in his Divine Master who walks before. Or to change the metaphor, the Christian must fight. To conquer, to win the crown are only obtained by the man who endures unto the end.

'*He that endureth to the end, shall be saved.*' *

At this particular stage the expression 'eternal life' may very well be introduced, inasmuch as so many people fail to grasp its true meaning.

Thousands of Christians imagine that the 'eternal life' is synonymous with a future life beyond the grave. The truth is that the expression has no reference

* S. Matt. x. 22.

to *time*, but on the contrary to a gift of *knowledge*. '*This is life eternal that they might know Thee, the Only True God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.*'* Eternal life, therefore, is a knowledge of the Everlasting God and His Son—something of the most vital consequence to the soul, when it reaches the end of its earthly passage. Without any knowledge of God, how is it possible to meet Him, much less to live with Him? To waste all the opportunities which would raise our souls and draw us nearer unto God, during our earthly lives, for the empty stupidities of this nether world, is to make one of the most awful mistakes imaginable.

To talk of death-bed confessions amongst men and women who never use the Name of God except in blasphemy, and who have lived a lifetime estranged from Him, in open rebellion towards Him; men who have made their choice through their own self-will, could hardly be said to confess their sins to a God of whom they know absolutely nothing. This is an abuse of life and must inevitably bear its own consequences.

The deeds of a merciful Christ are often pointed out, to make excuse for these irreprobate sinners '*a bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench*'† but let us ever be reminded that mercy cannot disturb justice, and there is a final limit to the former. So life goes on. The human being, body, soul, and spirit, traverses its way through life. In a world of probation, man works out his life's problem. He is, on the one hand, careful lest the temporal things of earth should impede the growth of his spiritual organism; or on the other hand, he abuses his whole being, by giving up himself to a life of unrighteousness.

What must be the end? We shall see on inquiry.

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* S. John xvii. 3. † Isaiah xlii. 3.

In a world beautiful still, where man has not contaminated it, we can still enjoy its innocent pleasures, and keep the soul intact. But a day will come when the Master calls. The soul and spirit leave the body, and pass into a spiritual life beyond. The body dies and sees corruption. '*In the midst of life, we are in death.*'*

* Burial Office

CHAPTER II

Death, Immortality

'*It is appointed unto men once to die.*'* With the exception of those two great personalities of the Old Testament, Enoch and Elijah, both of whom did not see death, there has never been found anyone to dispute this statement. The life of man in this world is for a time and a season. It is limited by a set of circumstances over which we have practically no control. There are certain natural laws which direct and govern our way through life, and which, if strictly obeyed make for bodily health and long life. But, as yet, we have not sufficient knowledge to enable us to predict with any degree of surety, the period over which life remains within the body. We do not know from day to day whether we shall be able to retain our life. Death, therefore, must be the loss of something to the body.

It is, in very truth, the passing of the soul and spirit from the body into another life, where there is no further need for flesh and blood.

Viewed externally, the most striking characteristic of the live body over the dead body is the presence of animation. If only we could recall the soul and

* Hebrews ix. 27.

spirit to the dead body, life would be restored; and once again we should see that body in full possession of its faculties, capable of performing all those functions which we attribute to life.

The soul of man, as we have already seen, is the true 'being' of man, the 'ego' around which there circulate the maelstroms of sin and virtue, each frantically striving to capture the soul for itself.

Or to change the metaphor, the earthly life of man is a time of probation. It is not a mere animal existence. Man, unlike the lower creation, is not satisfied with eating and drinking; he has higher tendencies, and nobler ideals. The whole history of civilisation is a description of what men, communities, and nations have obtained, through a steady progression towards a higher call, whether it be intellectual or spiritual.

Man lives for a short time, short indeed as compared with the existence of the earth as a habitable globe, but obviously quite long or short enough for the working out of God's economy.

From the earliest days in the history of man, there has always been a more or less settled belief that beyond the grave there is some form of life. It was a natural instinct which developed into a strong belief, equal in every respect to what was obtained long centuries afterwards by pure logical reasoning.

True it is that there have been great thinkers, in many schools of thought, who have proclaimed that bodily death is the end of the personality of the individual. How they arrive at their conclusions is a mystery! They have no basis of evidence to work upon, and obviously all their processes of reasoning must be faulty. It is impossible for any theory of man's existence in the world to be put forward with its immoralities and disappointments, unless we further believe in

a life beyond death. Without that future life, filled with spiritual functions, this earth-life is one tantalising enigma. But once believe, in accordance with the Faith of Christ, that the life of this world is but a fragment of a greater life; that from this Militant Church we pass, by the exclusion of the body, to a world of spirits, known as the Expectant Church; and beyond that, soul and body united, into the Church Triumphant—to a Paradise with God: then the life of man loses much of its mystery

We may therefore quite truthfully say that it has always been the universal belief of all peoples and tongues, in every stage of civilisation, and as far back as to the very beginnings of history, that life extends beyond this limitable world of time and space, into something which is fuller, greater, and more glorious than anything we could experience here. There comes an inspiration from the language of the poet.

"*There is no death. What seems so, is transition.*" This doctrine which has been so universally held, is known by the name of Immortality. And the purport of this book is to expound it in the light of Revelation, and particularly the Revelation which Jesus Christ gave to the world. It would be well, however, before we examine the condition of the human soul and its movements at the moment it has escaped from the body, to briefly examine those beliefs held in pre-Christian times, by such peoples as are embraced (a) in primitive nations, (b) in the philosophy of Greece, (c) in the religion of the Hebrews.

In Primitive Nations

At the threshold of this subject, we are met with a mystery. "*How remarkable,*" *we are told,* "*that*

these illiterate, uncivilised, wicked, and vicious barbarians, ever had the imagination to believe and to yearn for a greater life beyond this!" One would have thought that the mere sight of a dead comrade, with the loss of all his faculties, meant an everlasting end of all things. But strangely enough it did not. Possibly the phenomenon of sleep might gradually have led these people into the belief in a future life. Whilst men slept, it was thought by many that another 'self' left the body, a 'dream-self' which performed in exactly the same manner, the deeds, as were acted by the man when awake.

The man saw in the visions of the night his other self or soul, fishing, shooting, or fighting; and the return of wakefulness simply meant the passage of the dream-body once more into his natural body. Thus it was considered a wrongful thing to turn a man over in his sleep; for it was more than possible that his soul might lose its way and give an occasion for death.

With these primitive peoples, the future life was to be identical with the present one. This was clearly shewn in many of their funeral ceremonies. On the occasion of the death of a king or high potentate, a certain number of his slaves were slain with him. If it were an earthly burial, they were buried alive; if the corpse were burnt upon the pyre, his slaves were burnt alive with him. In some of the aboriginal tribes of Australia, the widow of a deceased man was, after the funeral rites, escorted home by a functionary, who beat the air with twigs in order that the ghost or spirit of the man should be driven off, and leave her free to re-marry.

In the graves of the Esquimaux and Aztecs, there are placed with the dead body, his horse, his dog, and his weapons of the chase.

It was thought that the 'scent' of these animals, being so much more cultivated than that of man, would with much more certainty guide his soul to the land of spirits. All these customs go to shew that the common belief was that the future life should be one in which the burthen of this life would be taken up again, although under happier conditions. But what the savage looked forward to was not of a very elevated character. All these people seemed to be possessed with similar ideals. They looked to physical prowess receiving the highest rewards. In Scandinavia, Odin's Hall was reserved exclusively for warriors. They were, without doubt, the Elect. Valhalla, the heaven of the Vikings, was roofed with shields, ornamented with coats of mail, and its columns erected with burnished spears. They were born to fight, so must the fight be extended in the future life. They rejoiced that it should be so. A battle by day, a healing of wounds and a feast by night, these were joys indeed, the crowning rewards of heaven.

Others again, look for no other life than improvement on the present one. The happy hunting grounds of the Indian, where there is perpetual summer, where the forest abounds in game, and where the arrow loses not its mark; these are examples of what primitive man thought of endless bliss.

Crude you may call them, but is the distance so very far removed from many in these present days, who, though sane in most matters, tell us in all seriousness that heaven's unspeakable joys will consist in an everlasting singing of "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah," on the banks of Jordan's stream? This is certainly no improvement on the earlier views of the aboriginal savage. For his primitive imagination there is an excuse; but surely none for the pseudo-educated man

who holds such childish ideas. In the earliest periods of the race, it was inevitable that the future world should seem to him a *natural* one. It was not possible for him to commence with spiritual conception. *" That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural."* * It is a wonderful evolutionary conception of an idea which begins in ignorant crudity and ends in moral, intellectual and spiritual perfection. We trace the progression over isolated periods of history. Yet in none are there lost examples of that divinely-implanted intuition which says " Death is not the end of all things."

Greek Philosophy

The early Greeks as compared with primitive tribes, were a nation of high culture. They had their opinions on Immortality. To them the conception was that of a subterranean world, wrapped in gloom, to which the soul passed at death. The soul itself, they believed, to be material, though of so fine a texture as to evade imprisonment.

No earthly hand could grasp it. It resembled almost perfectly the image of an object, insensible, but capable of recognition in Hades, the name of the place where all souls dwelt.

Sophocles puts into the mouth of the dying *Antigone*, *" I hope to be welcomed by my mother, and my father and my brother."*

The dwellers in Hades were full of life. They eagerly questioned the new-comers from the earth above, and sought the latest information.

Homer tells us that when the soul of *Achilles* heard

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* 1 Cor. xv. 46.

of the mighty deeds of his son *Neoptolemus*, he quivered with excitement, taking mighty steps through the meadows of *Asphodel*. Yet in spite of these increments of comfort, there was no inherent cheerfulness in the place. To the Greek of this period, death held out no bright vision. He hated the prospect of death. To become a mere spectre of what he had been was an intolerable thought, and *Achilles* was simply the mouthpiece of contemporary thought when he declared that he would rather serve on earth for hire, than be ruler over all the dead.

The later Greeks, subsequent to *Homer*, held very different theories. It was not possible, amongst such cultivated men, that there should not evolve a desire to see wickedness punished and virtue rewarded. Thus we find that, later on, this place called Hades was divided into two parts, the sphere for wicked souls being given the name of Tartarus. At first, only those who blasphemed the gods found their place at death in this dreadful pit of iniquity. Later, imagination realised another place for those whose lives on earth were full of corruption ; and later still, the belief was held that all evil deeds must be expiated by future suffering.

Thus sin elicited the wrath of the gods, and made of Tartarus a place of endless woe. But what was the position of the man of moral excellence ? Obviously he would receive the smiles of the gods, and the sympathy which existed between them opened out to him a place or condition of joy—Elysium—to which he might hope ultimately to attain. It was a state of pure delight, a land of perfect happiness, far beyond man's ultimate desire. One very pronounced characteristic of this Grecian faith was that in any future punishment, all trace of vindictiveness was completely

eliminated. This stands in marked contrast to what was believed by certain of the early Christian Fathers. Some of their writings display the horrible thought that the glory of the Saints in heaven will be enhanced at sight of the tortures of the damned.

Ultimately, there were some who grew to believe that the future life meant an actual advance. Death held out visions of glorious hope. For the latest Grecian thought on Immortality we have need to read the closing scene in the life of *Socrates*, condemned to death and holding the poison-cup in his hand. His discourse on Immortality to his followers ere he took the deadly draught is not unworthy of the highest type of Christian thought. He died hundreds of years before the Christian era. What might he not have been if only he had known the Son of Man! This prince of men, gained a reward, eternal in the heavens.

The Religion of the Hebrews

It is one of the most remarkable facts in the history of God's ancient people that the belief in Immortality was conspicuously absent. This fact comes to us with almost a shock. If the Greeks whose religion was polytheistic, could arrive at a conclusion through *à priori* reasoning without the slightest measure of revelation, how strange that the ancient Hebrews should be in entire ignorance of it! That there can be no doubt on the question is clearly shewn in their writings, which only too faithfully record their thoughts. Here are some examples:

"If ye keep My commandments, I will give you rain in due season; your land shall yield its increase, and ye shall eat your bread to the full; I will rid evil beasts out

of the land, and your enemies shall fall before your sword. . . . But if ye will not keep My commandments, ye shall sow your seed in vain, ye shall be killed by your enemies; I will affect you with pestilence and with burning ague that shall consume your eyes." * There is not one word concerning the consequences of conduct, in any life beyond the grave. *Isaiah*, who wrote of the future reign of Righteousness, never once speaks of the personal survival of the righteous. If these early writers were ever charged with the troubles of the righteous and the prosperity of the wicked, they never replied that there was a full and ample compensation in a brighter life with God. No. One and all refer to the shortening of the present life of the wicked, and its prolongation for the good.

"The wicked shall not live out half his days; but because thou hast made the Lord thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, and with long life shall He satisfy thee." This is undoubtedly the general teaching of the Old Testament. A long earthly life, as also shewn in the fifth commandment, was what the upright man might look forward to, but the ultimate fate of both righteous and wicked was alike.

It would, however, be untrue to say that in the Old Testament there are no expressions which speak of a life beyond. Here are a few examples:

"Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." † *"God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for He shall receive me."* ‡ *"Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory."* § *"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will*

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* Leviticus xxvi. † Ps. xvi. 10. ‡ Ps. xlix. 15.
§ Ps. lxxiii. 24.

redeem them from death." * *" Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."* †

Finally, we get that wonderful passage from the book of Job, *" I know that my Redeemer liveth."* Through a mistranslation of the word *' Redeemer'* which should be *' Avenger,'* we lose all the glorious hope which it is supposed to radiate. Yet the reference is to a future life. *" I shall see Him, when worms have destroyed my body."* ‡ From the quotations here given, it would appear as though the evidence for immortality was unmistakable. One important fact must, however, be observed. With the exception of the Book of Job, which is an ancient book, all the other books according to the ablest critics are far more recently written than the marginal dates would seem to imply. None were written, we are told, until 100-150 B.C., in a period when ancient Hebrew tradition was rapidly changing under the influence of Greek and Persian philosophy which believed in Immortality.

With respect to the passage in Job in which 'Avenger' must replace ' Redeemer,' it may mean no more than this, that Job was assured his near kinsman or avenger would take heed of the evils which he had borne, and righteously exact payment. But perhaps the most striking proof of the above contention will be realised, if we compare two of the Apocryphal Books.

The one, the Book of Wisdom, written in Greek at Alexandria, and therefore influenced by Greek thought;

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* Hosea xiii. 14. † Daniel xii. 2.
‡ Job xix. 25, 26.

the other, the Book Ecclesiasticus, a purely Hebrew book. In the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon, we find frequent references to the Platonic theory of Immortality, and we are not surprised. Here is a passage: *"The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seem to die, and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction: but they are at peace. For though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of Immortality. And having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded: for God proved them and found them worthy for Himself."* *

The contrast between this writer and his teaching, and the doctrine as revealed in the Book Ecclesiasticus, is wonderful. In the latter there is no trace of Greek philosophy. The hope even of a resurrection of the body is, or seems to be, passing away; for the writer says, *"Thanksgiving perisheth from the dead, as from one that is not: the living and sound in heart shall praise the Lord."*† Thus with the advent of Jesus Christ, the Jews attained a doctrine of Immortality, but at no great period before it. Like the Christian, the Jew believed that there was a difference between the soul and spirit. To the latter, the soul represented the power of vitality —animal life, the spirit represented the mental faculties—a gift from God.

They believed that when a man died, his spirit was re-absorbed into God and his soul journeyed to what they called Sheol, imperfectly translated Hell. Some of the Psalms depict it in very gloomy colouring. *"My soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave."*‡ *"I am counted with them that*

* Wisdom iii. 1-5. † Ecclus. xvii. 28.
‡ Ps. lxxxviii. 3.

go down into Sheol : I am as a man that hath no strength . . . whom thou rememberest no more." * *" If Thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into Sheol."*†

The current belief at the time of our Lord was altogether brighter than this. The Jewish nation had recognised that beyond death there were three conditions. Two were permanent, Gehenna or Hell, and Paradise or Heaven ; the third, Sheol, a temporary state of purgation.

Thus *Dr. Edersheim* writes, *" Only the perfectly just enter at once into Paradise ; all the rest pass through a period of purification and perfection, variously lasting up to one year. But notorious breakers of the law and especially apostates from the Jewish Faith and heretics, have no hope whatever, either here or hereafter. Such is the last word which the Synagogue has to say to mankind."* There is, however, a considerable amount of difficulty involved in making clear what was the Jewish Charter of faith on Immortality. The probability is, there never was one. Two or three points seem to stand out plainly. The Jews were quite familiar with the idea of eternal happiness and eternal punishment. Also of a punishment which for some, would end in annihilation, and for others in restoration, towards which they were helped by the prayers of the living.

* Ps. lxxxviii. 4, 5. † Ps. xxviii. 1.

CHAPTER III

The Particular Judgment

"*. . . but after this the Judgment.*" * These words are a continuation of those which headed the previous chapter, when the writer speaks of the inevitableness of death. And by the juxta-position of the two words death and judgment, it would seem as though these two great fundamental acts followed upon each other in rapid succession. Previously, we have seen that there have been men who have denied that there could be any life beyond the grave. But such men are altogether out of joint with the belief of the world from its earliest history; and the language of the Christian Faith kills such statements altogether. The above quotation is quite enough in itself to place within the sphere of man's reasoning capacity an impenetrable obstacle, to say nothing of the innumerable facts which are met with on the page of the New Testament and which convert all surmises on the future life into wonderful realities.

There are many other people, however, who have the most peculiar ideas as to what takes place at death. Some believe that at the instant of death, the soul of man passes at once to its final destination; heaven or hell, in accordance with the moral and

* Hebrews ix. 27.

spiritual life lived here on earth. Such thoughts wholly neglect to take into consideration the awful holiness of God, the dreadful nature of sin, the Last Day, until which there is no resurrection of the body, and a host of other facts. Others again believe that at death body, soul, and spirit remain dead; the body only decomposing until the Last Day when that body will rise with its soul and spirit, and give an account of its earthly deeds before the Judgment Throne of God.

In both instances, such people have the unconscionable presumption to think that at death they are worthy of heavenly bliss. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Any man who has the least idea of the nature of God must view with misgiving his access into the Divine Presence. It would be altogether too great an ordeal, even though he had received the grace of Absolution at the moment of death. For what is the primary function of forgiveness? It is not to obliterate all traces of sin, but to cleanse its guilt, and to leave its power, with its final destruction, partly, at least, to human effort. This is what S. Paul meant when he wrote, "*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*" * The sinful habits of a life-time cannot be eradicated in a moment of time, however sincere be the confession. Instead of sleeping in the grave or passing at death to our consummation, ideas which are stupidly wrong, the faithful soul has to pass through a purgation, into a Spiritual or Intermediate world, into an Expectant Church, until it is cleansed, purified, and made immaculate, fit indeed for heaven.

And this is not conjecture. To one who reads the Scriptures with intelligence, there is much to be obtained, much that illuminates our conception of

* Phil. ii. 12.

God's purpose towards mankind, and much that causes us to rejoice in His Majesty and Glory.

At the moment of death, then, there is the Judgment.

It is a recognised axiom of the Christian Faith that spiritual things can only be spiritually discerned. In other words, that even amongst those who have most highly cultivated the spiritual life in this world, find how surprisingly difficult, in some cases even impossible, it is to define spiritual phenomena within the range of human language. We are so interwoven with the material, that we are compelled to be content with human definition.

We are conscious that the analogies, the allegories, the figures of speech, and poetic liberty, as seen throughout the Bible, are the best linguistic attempts to furnish us with any understanding.

And herein lies a danger. As an illustration let us read S. John's description of the heavenly city in the Apocalypse. The streets of gold, the foundations of precious stones, the gates of pearl. Is such a description at all satisfactory to intellectual manhood? Certainly not. Does it fulfil the heart's desire of a moral and spiritual idealist? Once again we assert the negative. To a child it is the greatest glory imaginable. Such words of beauty fill the child's heart with wonder; and yet we would not spoil that vision, however fanciful it might be; for the wonder of the child finds its equivalent in rising manhood, in that glorious worship of God which illuminates and transfigures his entire being.

The crucial point to be noticed in this apocalyptic speech is its incorrectness from a spiritual point of view. We do not blame the Apostle, but on the contrary sympathise with him, harassed, as we see he is, by the

limitations of human language. An attempt to describe spiritual phenomena, so as to cast an image of meaning upon the human mind, is known to us as Anthropomorphism. In the infancy of the world, it is doubtful whether any other method could possibly have been devised, to make men in the least conceive God. At the same time, we must always remember that an anthropomorphic description of a spiritual event may by no means be in harmony with the God-expressed one, which latter in all probability our mental capacity would be unable to grasp.

And the judgment at death is known as the 'Particular Judgment.'

There are those who believe that the judgment, as spoken by our Lord, is the 'General Judgment,' which they imagine will take place at the conclusion of time. Such, however, is not the case. There is only one Judgment, the one at death, the 'General Judgment' referring to a phenomenon altogether different. The 'Particular Judgment' must take place at death, because it is then, and at no other time, when man is placed in a definite spiritual sphere. This is clearly shewn in the figuratively-written parable of the '*Rich Man and Lazarus.*'* It is a picture of the Intermediate Life. The two men are not represented to be in the same place, for an impassable gulf separates them. The one is in torment, the other is comforted. The parable is not a representation of the final conditions of man, heaven and hell; for the earth was at that moment a habitable globe. The rich man told Abraham that he had still five brothers, who had never yet tasted of death. How had these two men arrived in this mysterious place?

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* S. Luke xvi.

Who had given them permission to enter that world of spirits ?

Surely, none other than Christ and by the passing of a Judgment.

To hold any contrary faith would be to throw in our lot with those who believe that between death and resurrection there is an undisturbed sleep. As we read the above-mentioned parable, we must be struck with the graphic description of the place to which the rich man and Lazarus were taken.

We need not hold that when death calls us to this 'place,' or better 'condition,' there will be any of these physical accidents which Christ so wonderfully drew. There cannot be ; it is not a physical place, but a spiritual condition. Abraham will not be present, conversing with the souls of man. '*Abraham's Bosom*' is simply a Jewish expression and no more. It represents a certain condition into which some souls pass at death. It has not the least connection with the presence of the Patriarch, and possibly meant no more than the popular expression of to-day '*Safe in the arms of Jesus.*' The Jews would, undoubtedly, understand every word that Christ spoke, and the figurative language which He used on this occasion only served to drive the truth more deeply home.

Similarly, when S. Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans, and exclaimed "*for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ,*"* he hardly expected that the souls of men, after their escape from the body at death, would be hurried to the 'Court of the Lord,' and there visualise Christ, the Judge, seated on the Throne of Justice, and surrounded by His Holy Angels, and then and there, after examination, be finally

* Romans xiv. 10.

approved or condemned. No. It is just on points like these, through the introduction of what we might term 'exaggerated language' that we fall into mistakes. We regard them, at times, as historical pictures, which they are not, and were never intended to be. The descriptive environment to the seeker after truth is of little consequence, so long as he remembers that the Divine lesson remains for all time. There is at death a judgment; and the spiritual significance of the metaphor need not be lost, even though it be shorn of all its physical accidents.

What, then, is this judgment, this 'Particular Judgment?' The Divine jurisdiction, it has been said, is latent in the structure of the soul. The mind of man is the Creator's Judgment seat. Everything we do carries with it its own retribution. The judgments of God are continuous, not catastrophic. It is all a question of cause and effect. They are merely the reaction of our conduct upon ourselves.

Man, in whatever rôle he predominates in this life, be he sinner or saint, finds a return for what he *does* in what he *is*. In other words, the former realises a *degradation* and the latter an *elevation* of character, the former a consciousness that he is in *discord*, and the latter in *harmony* with his surroundings. But it must be noticed that the law of Retribution is instantaneous and incessant in its operation; there can be no occasion for a final moment to redress its accumulated disbalancements, no occasion for a public enquiry. The presence of any such disbalancements is only to be found in our defective vision. We ought to know that the closing of each day of our earthly lives, brings with it a balance sheet of how we stand in the eyes of a just God. Every day therefore is a day of judgment.

But there is one day which is universally regarded as *the* Day of Judgment, and that is the day of death, a day when man ceases to sin. It receives its distinctive title for two reasons. Firstly, the sum total of our life is for ever added up. It can never be altered. Our fate is for all time settled. And secondly, it proclaims the truth that death does not change the soul. Immediately *after death*, our spiritual condition will be the same as it was immediately *before*. Death determines for every man his position beyond the veil.

There is nothing strange or miraculous in this. It is the natural and inevitable result of all God's laws; laws which are the expression of a Divine Will, in which there is no variableness nor shadow of turning.

This is the simple truth which Jesus always taught, and is therefore the only possible exposition of the Particular Judgment.

CHAPTER IV

Hades, Intermediate Life, Church Expectant, Purgatory, Paradise

We are now passing to the contemplation of a life of soul and spirit—an experience of which in our selves we know nothing, nor has any soul ever returned from that life beyond the grave to give an account of what that life is like. It is known to Christian people as the *Intermediate Life,* a life between earth and heaven, a life of the soul separated from the body by death, and one, in accordance with the Will of God, which has a purpose for mankind.

It is known also as the *Expectant Church,* in which the waiting soul is ever yearning for perfection or for the consummation of all things.

For many hundreds of years it has received the distinct title of Purgatory, where the soul after death is cleansed and purified and made fit for the presence of God. These are different names for the one condition of life in a world of spirit, and yet none of them are Biblical. This surely ought not to act as a deterrent for their use, because we have in our religion many words not found in the Bible, which we could hardly do without, and which also must be repudiated, if those above are ignored and rejected. Do we dispense with such words as *Sunday, Trinity, Holy Communion,*

and a host of others, and deny them a lawfulness, on the plea that they are not Biblical terms? Certainly not, and in this particular case for a very good reason, because various commentators are not at all in unison when they come to define with accuracy the corresponding expressions, clothed in the language of the Gospel.

Of the existence of such a condition as *Purgatory*, there can be no shadow of doubt. It means a state of cleansing, where the saved but imperfect soul is chastised and refined, and in which at length it is immaculately purified, and reflects the whiteness of the Father's glory. People may and do dislike the expression, chiefly because of its use in the Roman Church, where around it has clung many notable abuses. There is, for example, the doctrine of Indulgences, in which monetary gifts might be left to a church or altar, in which the repetition of masses might be said for that soul's eternal welfare. In other words, masses might be purchased for the dead, and this, in accordance with the belief, punishment might be eliminated for the soul over long periods of years in Purgatory.

Such a belief does not contain even the slightest element of truth, but is illogical and fundamentally ludicrous. It must always be remembered, however, that "*the abuse of anything does not necessarily take away its lawful use,*" and if only such a rule had been in use at the Reformation, we should never have seen such a presentment as the Church of England shews at the present time, not only with respect to this particular doctrine but with many others. We are told that in the 22nd Article, the doctrine of Purgatory is entirely condemned. That is not true. What the Article does condemn is not Purgatory nor Roman Purgatory, but the *Romish* doctrine of Purgatory. This Romish doctrine is '*doctrina Romanensium.*' '*Romanenses*'

was a name used by Luther for what we should now call the Ultramontane party. The official Roman doctrine is not condemned by the Article, for the simple reason that the reforming Council of Trent which had begun its sittings when the 39 Articles were drawn up, had not yet reached the subject of Purgatory. Later on, the Council of Trent laid down "*that there is a Purgatory and that the souls detained therein are helped by the prayers of the faithful and especially by the acceptable Sacrifice of the Altar.*" This is strictly in accordance with Anglo-Catholic teaching.

Having attempted to clear the word Purgatory of its bad name, and restore to it its true meaning, let us pass on to the consideration of the souls who enter it when the body dies. In the first place we need to understand that ordinary, wilful sin, has two aspects. There is its guilt, and there is its power. When we make our confession of sin, those sins are absolved through the Redemption of Jesus Christ. His precious blood that was shed on Calvary redeemed sin only so far as its guilt was concerned. The power of sin remained, as is seen in the sinful habits of man. The confession that a man makes to-day is only petitioned because of his firm belief that he will be forgiven. Yet, strange to say, he commits a similar series of sins to-morrow. Must we conclude that the blood of Jesus has ceased to cleanse? No. The guilt only is wiped out, but the power remains, namely the tendency of falling into a temptation whenever and wherever it is presented.

This habit of sinning must be crushed out. A death-bed confession produces no passport for heaven. It is only when the soul has been purified of every evil tendency, whose every thought is centred on heaven and who only craves for holiness and an unseverable communion with God, that it can be said to have reached

the confines of heaven. This is the purpose, then, of Purgatory. The waiting soul suffers the penalty due to sin. No doubt, God could cleanse the soul in an instant, if He pleased. We have the undoubted assurance as to the historical fact that at least on two occasions, Enoch and Elijah had no need of the purgatorial life. The Church has always believed that the Blessed Virgin Mary, who was sinless, had no need of the purifying power of the Intermediate world, for there was nothing to cleanse. So it is also believed that Moses, whom God buried, and whose tomb no man knoweth to this day, is simply another figurative expression for saying that he was received up into heaven.

So also, S. Paul, S. Peter, the Martyrs, the Apostles, all infant children who have died directly after Baptism, we believe, have passed already to a condition of glory in heaven. In a later chapter, we shall give evidence for such a belief. In the meantime, it would be interesting to know where these modern writers, who disclaim the belief that anyone has, as yet, passed into heaven, would place these innocent infants. Particularly is their difficulty enhanced when S. John speaks with the wisdom of a heavenly seer, "*And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault, before the throne of God.*" *

The ordinary human being has lost so many opportunities in this life, that it would be foolish to imagine that at death he could possibly be near the borderland of bliss. He must be perfected, and that can only be accomplished by an extension of the life of the soul and spirit, freed from temptation, until his heart beats in unison with the heart of God.

It will thus be seen that the doctrine of Purgatory

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* Rev. xiv. 5.

is tremendously far-reaching. It enlarges one's vision of the Glory of God, and lays a restraining hand on one and all who would rush impetuously into that Divine Presence, "*where angels fear to tread.*" Further, it emphasises the inherent wickedness of sin. However trifling a sin may appear in our sight, its enormity cannot be estimated in the sight of God. No sin can possibly be overlooked, for the words of our Lord immediately dispel such thoughts. "*Whatsoever a man soweth that also shall he reap.*" * "*And then he shall reward every man according to his works.*" † "*I will give unto every one of you, according to your works.*" ‡

It is not so much God who punishes us, as we ourselves. A penalty for breaking God's laws must inevitably be paid. If the punishment comes not in this life, then in Purgatory.

Now let us turn to the Biblical expressions of the state or condition of the dead. There are several references. One of the most important is to be found in the parable of Dives and Lazarus. The parable is placed before us in all its material tracery, and yet it does not obscure one whit the Divine teaching. In that place (using the word spiritually) where the drama takes place, there are at least two distinct spheres, separated by an impassable gulf. In the one, *hell*, or more correctly translated *hades*, the rich man is to be seen suffering torment. In the other, not in bliss or joy, but merely 'comforted,' is to be seen Lazarus in *Abraham's Bosom.*

In order to make the parable absolutely clear, Jesus makes a personality of Abraham by means of which through a conversation with the rich man, we are enabled to learn many potent truths. For the moment,

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* Gal. vi. 7. † S. Matt. xvii. 27. ‡ Rev. ii. 23.

we are not concerned with that conversation. It is obvious that Abraham's Bosom is not heaven. It has none of the brightness and glory attributed to that condition of bliss, and therefore can only be a picture of the Intermediate Life. But what about the condition in which we find Dives? He is not in the place of the damned, Gehenna, but in another sphere of Hades, though very far removed from Abraham's Bosom. Is he then in the same condition as the lost, who have relinquished all hope of salvation, and is now receiving a foretaste, being in torments of what Gehenna will be like, after the General Resurrection? It would not seem so.

There are many striking points in this conversation which would unquestionably place the condition of Dives far above what we should expect from a soul which was irrevocably alienated from God. In the first place, his earthly life displayed no excess of sin. He was not guilty of murders, adulteries and blasphemies, which we naturally expect to see in the doomed soul. His chief offence is his selfishness, which leads him ultimately to a forgetfulness of his duty to his neighbour and possibly to his God.

With this small amount of evidence before us, we might feel inclined to think that his punishment was in excess of his sin. Look, however, at the attitude of Dives. He is certainly not rebellious, but on the contrary submissive. He asks not for deliverance, but for a very slight favour. His own clarified conscience has put him in that condition at death, and he makes no complaint. Nor is he filled with rage when Abraham refuses to alleviate his sufferings with a tiny drop of water. Nay, instead of cursing, he prays for his brethren. Some people living in the world to-day might well take him for an example, when placed under

similar circumstances. Too often, when they have ruined their own lives, they are seized with a diabolical delight to effect the downfall of others.

But to proceed. Notice the manner in which Abraham addresses him. He uses an endearing term '*Son.*' Then he tells him to '*remember.*' "There was a time," he would say, "when thou hadst thy good things but didst not use them to the best advantage. Thy punishment is just. Meditate upon it. The flame of Eternal Life is not yet extinguished within thy soul, else if it had been, thou wouldst have found thyself in a nethermost hades, lost for ever. Chastisement may be remedial. It may even yet work out thy salvation." It is true that *Cornelius à Lapide* believes that the rich man is undergoing eternal condemnation in Gehenna. But he is almost entirely unsupported by the Primitive Fathers; and his interpretation is confuted at the present time by all Catholic churchmen.

This is a picture, then, drawn by our Lord to illustrate the Intermediate life, a description of Purgatory in which the soul is built up from strength to strength.

We now turn to an incident in our Blessed Lord's career, of Himself visiting Purgatory. There are three Biblical references. "*Christ also suffered for sins once . . . being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit: in which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.*" * "*He also descended into the lower parts of the earth.*" † "*To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.*" ‡ The first reference shews unmistakably the antithesis between the lower and higher parts of the human nature of Christ, that is

* 1 S. Pet. iii. 18, 19. R. V. † Eph. iv. 9, R. V.
‡ S. Luke xxiii. 43, R. V.

between His flesh and His spirit. It has no reference to the action of the Holy Spirit—the Third Person of the Trinity. The human spirit of Christ at death went into another sphere to preach the Gospel—the good message to the antediluvians. He spoke particularly to those who were disobedient to the teachings of Noah, and perished in the flood. Where were these souls? *S. Ambrose* says, "*Christ descended to the lowest Tartarus, and burst asunder the bars and gates of hell; and overthrowing the sovereignty of death, recalled to life from the jaws of the devil, certain souls that had been tied and bound with the chains of sin.*"

S. Augustine, after denouncing the belief that by this act Christ had pronounced a universal pardon and emptied hell of its inhabitants, modified this statement in another place, by holding that a limited number whom for some reason Christ deemed worthy of such favour, were delivered from the torments of hell.

S. Cyril of Alexandria declares that Christ "*not only offered salvation to men upon earth, but also to those who had already departed and were sitting in the caves of the abyss in darkness.*"

Unfortunately none of these conclusions can be accepted, for the obvious reason that if the soul of the impenitent can be snatched out of Gehenna, then the Particular Judgment is no irrevocable settlement of man's spiritual destiny. *Gregory the Great* and the *Venerable Bede*, with many others, could not agree with the decision of those early Fathers, and they were widely supported by the Catholic Church in general. A possible, if not a probable, reading of the passage would be that when Christ died upon the Cross, His soul, with that of the penitent thief, passed into Hades. His purpose in doing so was for one reason, that He might pass through all the experiences of man. He was

made sin for us, and therefore with the rest of mankind in their disembodied state, He passed into Purgatory, not for the purpose of the cleansing of His own body, for that was incorruptible, but to experience what all mankind must ultimately know.

Further, this also gave our Blessed Lord an opportunity to ' preach,' and the substance of His preaching was the ' Gospel.'

We read that the souls whom He addressed were ' *in prison.*'

This by no means bears the construction that they were incorrigibles, undergoing penal confinement for sin and transgression ; for the etymological interpretation of the word is simply a place of ' safe keeping.'

The soul of our Lord was with that of the thief ' in Paradise ' or in ' Abraham's Bosom,' and there is no positive evidence that He even passed so far as to the place of Dives, across the impassable gulf.

It hardly needs very much imagination to arrive at the conclusion that there may be endless spheres and gulfs in Hades, representative of the spiritual conditions of the men and women who leave this world.

But now another problem presents itself. " Why did our Blessed Lord preach to the antediluvians—to the men who were disobedient in the day of Noah, and were drowned in the Flood ? "

They were disobedient, it is true, to Noah's teaching, but everthing points to the fact that though thy were too late in their repentance to obtain material safety, when destruction overshadowed them, and there were no signs of escape, the voice of penitence was raised aloud.

If we search the Gospel, we find that Christ refers to the waters of the Flood on which the Ark floated in safety, as a clear type of the waters of Holy Baptism

through which men pass on their entrance into the Ark of Christ's Church. The association of these ideas may possibly have caused the mention of one individual class, who received the Gospel in Purgatory. It is also a very remarkable fact that in the earliest of writers we find a mysterious desire to connect those who perished in the Flood, in an especial manner with the message of Salvation brought by Christ ; as though they who had suffered in the most severe and awful of all nature's cataclysms needed more than all men the comforting Gospel of Christ's Atoning Death and Resurrection.

At any rate, whatever the true explanation may be, we have the historical evidence given by S. Peter for the passage of our Lord's soul into Purgatory, and for the Article of the Christian Faith—He descended into Hades. S. Paul, in the quotation taken from his Epistle to the Ephesians, is but emphasising what S. Peter does so much more aptly in the lines above.

The third passage, the one made by the dying Saviour on the Cross, needs a little deeper thought ; for ' Paradise ' is an expression never used in connection with this world of waiting souls, except by Christ, and then only on this one occasion.

" With Me in Paradise." We cannot measure the effect of the change wrought by our Lord's perfected Atonement upon the souls of the faithful who had died before the Victory of the Cross ; and because of that it is impossible to found an argument from our Blessed Lord's use of the word *' Paradise '* to describe the condition of holy souls, during the interval between His Death and the complete triumph of His Resurrection and Ascension.

It will be therefore necessary to refer to two other occasions in the Bible where the word ' Paradise ' is

used. The former is the description of a state into which S. Paul was caught and who received the Gospel by the word of Christ. The Apostle is caught up into 'Paradise' or the 'Third Heaven.'* Both expressions seem to be synonymous. The apostle's words imply that his rapture was far beyond the 'comfort' of Abraham's Bosom or the 'yearning' of the Church Expectant; they rather speak of an immeasurable bliss, a glory of Heaven or of the Church Triumphant.

Thorndike does not identify the 'Paradise' spoken on the Cross to the penitent thief, with the 'Paradise' into which S. Paul was caught.

He says, "*It seems no more than reason to grant that S. Paul was ravished to the presence of our Lord Christ. But I must needs insist that the word 'Paradise' could not signify the same thing to S. Paul after the Ascension of our Lord, as to the hearers of our Lord before it.*"

S. Irenæus identifies '*Paradise*' with the '*Third Heaven*' as the place to which Enoch and Elijah were translated, not with the Church Triumphant.

What, we may ask, did the Redemption of Jesus Christ effect upon the souls of men?

The seed of the woman had indeed bruised the serpent's head, and had "*opened the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.*"

For until He Himself had entered therein, the souls of the righteous were excluded from the 'Vision of God.' How noticeably different is the language of the Epistles from that of the Gospels on this matter.

Both are agreed that Hades is 'below' the earth. "*Now that He ascended, what is it, but that He also descended first, into the lower parts of the earth?*"‡ "*He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.*"§

* 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4. † Te Deum. ‡ Eph. iv. 9.
§ 1 Pet. iii. 9.

"*He descended into hell,*" * that is into Hades, the place of the righteous dead.

Cornelius à Lapide understands the '*Paradise*' *of S. Paul to be no longer a place to which one could be said to* '*descend,*' *but rather into the highest heaven; nay S. Paul himself speaks of being* '*caught up.*'

S. Cyril of Jerusalem says, "*Elias was taken up only to Heaven, but Paul into Heaven and into Paradise; for it behoved the disciple of Jesus to receive more manifold grace.*"

The other reference to the word 'Paradise' is made by S. John in the Apocalypse. "*To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.*"†

This place or condition must be something obviously different from that into which the penitent thief entered with Christ, on the great day of His Crucifixion.

Archbishop Trench favours the argument that there has been a development of the meaning of the word 'Paradise.' He says, "*We may thus trace Paradise passing through an ascending scale of meanings. From any garden of delight, which is its first meaning, it comes to be predominately applied to the Garden of Eden; then to the resting souls in joy and felicity; and lastly to the very Heaven itself; and we see eminently in it, what we see indeed in so many words, how revealed religion assumes them into its service, and makes them vehicles of far higher truth than any which they knew at first, transforming and transfixing them as in this case, from glory to glory.*" ‡ The meaning of the expression 'Paradise' has thus completely changed.

From being a name given to the 'lower parts of the earth,' it is now used for that condition where Christ

* Apostles' Creed. † Rev. ii. 7.
‡ Epistle to the Seven Churches.

'ascended up on high.' *Cornelius à Lapide* in his comment on S. Luke xxiii. 43 quickly sums up the truth "*Where Christ is, there is Paradise; where the Vision of God is and beatitude, there is Heaven.*"

Others assert that too little emphasis is put upon the words '*with Me.*' It was because the penitent thief was *with* Jesus that Purgatory was at once transformed into Paradise or Heaven.

The Catholic Faith on this point is quite clear, and admits of no confusion. Paradise is never to be used as an alternative expression for Purgatory. Paradise is where Christ is, and He is in the highest Heaven, or as S. Paul expresses it, "*far above all principality and power and might and dominion.*"*

Hymn 234 (A. & M.) "O Paradise! O Paradise!" asserts most forcibly that the name which is undergoing interpretation is an expression which is always used for the Church Triumphant and not for the Church Expectant. All Catholics, therefore, Orthodox, Roman, and Anglican, are agreed that Heaven and Paradise have been synonymous terms since the Ascension of Jesus Christ.

* Eph. i. 21.

CHAPTER V

Life in Purgatory, Condition of the Faithful, Reunion, Recognition.

We have now seen what are the different names with which the all-embracing title of Intermediate Life has been given.

That the parable of ' Dives and Lazarus ' only shews us a very feeble picture of what that life will be, is obvious to everyone. In the first place there are only three characters, Abraham, Lazarus, and Dives.

There is not the slightest hint as to where the innumerable company of souls were located at the time when Jesus spoke the parable, and drew the picture. We are told of an impassable gulf which prevented a communication between Dives and Lazarus. May we not sincerely ask if there is one and only one gulf ? Since men leave this world at death and pass into Purgatory, illuminated at the one extreme with a glorious light, and at the other, with nothing but the faintest glimmer ; yet all ' saved ' because of what our Lord said in respect to the ' smoking flax and the bruised reed,' how is it possible for anyone of them to experience the least shadow of joy and comfort, which was the lot of Lazarus, if they must all live together ? It would rather seem as though there were an infinite number of ' passable ' gulfs, each of

which represented a cleavage between two definite spheres of different standards of holiness, and these ' passable ' gulfs were crossed in the soul's flight onwards and upwards.

Dives could not pass to the sphere of Lazarus, because the latter was too far removed in righteousness from him. He was separated by a gulf which was impassable, but that need not always be. The rich man must be content to move slowly, to encompass those gulfs as the Purgatorial cleansing gave him permission. From suffering torment, he would ultimately pass into a condition when he would experience joy, and his soul would burn with zeal for God.

And now our attention must be given to those who, at death, were filled with Eternal Life, the possession of which saved them from perdition. With regard to the rest, who in this world ignored and despised God, we have been mercifully spared from seeing or knowing their condition. That there is a Hell—a Gehenna, at the Last Day, is true beyond doubt ; but as to what they are doing in that period between death and the resurrection of the body, we have no knowledge. Further, it is idle to speculate. Will the soul in Purgatory be without shape, a floating cloud—nebulous ? From the earliest times, it has been thought that there are ' *spirit forms,*' that the soul of man with his spirit, is still incorporeal, but retaining a shape or figure. This is not without evidence. But they have no body. With both the saved and the lost it is a fact, that the body is suffering corruption in the grave.

Tertullian, in his treatise on the Soul, expresses a very definite belief that *" it retained the image of the body, by which it had been enclosed."*

Irenæus claims that Christ was his authority for his pronouncement. He states, *" the Lord has taught with*

very great fulness, that souls not only continue to exist, not by passing from body to body, but that they preserve the same form in their separate state as the body had to which they were adapted; and that they remember the deeds which they did in this state of existence."

Lutheran Martensen arrived at the conclusion that the souls must have some kind of clothing, "*some intermediate kind of corporeity in the realm of the dead, and that this need not exclude the fundamental spiritual idea of Hades.*"

No doubt these results were attained by the Biblical stories of the appearances of Samuel to King Saul at Endor, of Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration, of the young man who with Elisha at Dothan saw the surrounding mountains covered with horses and chariots of fire, and of the many presentations of angels, both in the Old and New Testaments.

If it should be adduced that these illustrations in no way prove that the soul must retain its earthly form in the life beyond, it is still far from touching the main issue, that there will be renewed companionship, and future recognition in that spiritual condition.

Without material eye and ear, we see the things about us and hear sounds which come from afar. But that is not all. There are occasions when we see and hear objects and sounds of which our companions are in absolute ignorance. The Bible is full of such instances. To take one such example, out of many, in the Old Testament.* Balaam, much against the Will of God, sets out on his ass to visit Balak. All is well for a time, when suddenly the ass stops and refuses to proceed. Balaam beats the animal but to no purpose. Suddenly the ass speaks, and, strange to relate, he

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* Num. xxii.

amongst all the company is the only one who understands its language. The rest merely hear the animal bray.

How is this? Balaam alone has been for the time being endowed with the gift of *clairaudience*, which enables him to discriminate, and detect through the ass, the voice and message of God. A moment later, the prophet raises his eyes and recognises an angel of light, barring his way. Had not the animal seen this spirit before his master, Balaam would have been slain.

But how could the prophet see the Angel which was intangible—a spirit? Because he was endowed once more, but this time with the gift of *clairvoyance*. He sees what others cannot see. And by the gift of *clairaudience*, he hears what others cannot hear. We see and hear sights and sounds by the material eye and ear *objectively*, but when we see and hear them *subjectively*, that is, when the impression is registered on the brain alone, no one else is conscious of the fact. Our Lord heard a voice from heaven, but the people thought it thundered. So also by intuition could similar results be achieved by man.

That there is recognition beyond the grave is clearly shewn in the fact that Dives saw both Abraham and Lazarus, and spoke with Abraham. It is a curious fact that Dives never directed a single word to Lazarus, nor did the latter ever seem to have the slightest interest in the affair.

This incident is hardly so peculiar if we give it a moment's consideration. Abraham is not so much a figure placed in one position, as the great Patriarch—the Father of the Church and Nation of God. In the parable, he commands the entire limits of Purgatory in such a manner as could not be said of any ordinary

soul. Possibly, Lazarus was not permitted to see and speak with those on lower spheres, but with the rich man it was different. He, in looking up at Abraham's Bosom, received an incentive to strive for that higher sphere, and thus the sight and conversation were a supreme help in his Purgatorial cleansing.

Another instance of '*recognition*' beyond, is surely shewn in the words of our Lord to the penitent thief. "*To-day, thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*" * More than anything else we may well believe that the companionship and reciprocity of love and the identity which would always remain between himself and his Master, would be of greater moment, even than the passage into a world where the soul would rest in comfort. The cry of David, long before the advent of Christ, when he was informed that Bathsheba's child was dead, distinctly shews that he expected to see the child again in a sphere beyond. "*But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*" †

If we go still farther back, we often find this expression used at the death of great men, that they were "*gathered unto their fathers.*" At first sight, the language would seem to mean no more than the placing of his bones beside those of his forebears, an incident just before the funeral. If, however, we turn to the case of Moses, we see things more clearly. God said to him, "*Die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people*"; ‡ but notice what follows, "*So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And He buried*

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* S. Luke xxiii. 43. † 2 Sam. xii. 15-23.
‡ Deut. xxxiii. 50.

him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor; but no one knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." *

A comparison of these two Biblical references clearly proves that the '*gathering unto his people*' was not a *burial*, for God buried him. The '*gathering*' was the reunion of the soul and spirit of Moses with those of a great ancestry of friends and relations who had passed the river of death before him. The great Christian truth of the '*Communion* of *Saints*' shews that any rate, in heaven, there will be a universal gathering together of friends and the formation of new friendships.

Also in Purgatory there seems no reason to doubt but that companionships, severed by death, will be renewed and strengthened in the case of those only whose spiritual attainments are identical. Before we leave this branch of the subject, there is one striking difficulty which demands a solution. Many people are troubled with the thought that others whom they have loved in this life, or have been held together by the strongest bonds of friendship, may possibly be unable to find them in the world to come. They know that the sense of memory will be retained by the souls in Purgatory, for Abraham said '*Son, remember*,' and that the helpless seeking for a wife, a husband, or a child, with no prospect of ever finding them, will cause a shadow to be created of intolerable grief. They picture to themselves the grief of David, as in agonised words, he wept over the death of a renegade son, "*O my son Absalom! my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son, my son!*" †

Perhaps the question can be answered if we try

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* Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6. † 2 Sam. xviii. 33.

to discover the rock foundation of love. We find it to be righteousness. A true friendship between two people can only last when each exacts from the other a higher and still nobler character. When one loses respect for a person, then true friendship or love begins to fail. Charles Kingsley's life affords a wonderful example of this truth. He was once asked to what he attributed his supreme character. His reply was characteristic, "*I had a friend.*" So precisely was it the case with Tennyson and Hallam. The result of that preponderating and inviolable friendship produced the "*In Memoriam.*"

The soul in Purgatory will not be disturbed by the absence of unworthy friends. That soul will have lost all that was earthly and carnal in his affection, he could not desire its presence. And though the memory of that carnal love be ineffaceable, it leaves no sting behind.

There will be a complete conformity to God's Will which will never question His judgments. We know that this must be so for our Heavenly Master has declared that we shall be "*equal unto the Angels.*" *

The joy and glory of God obliterates anything of that kind from ever entering heaven, and what is true of heaven is true also of Purgatory. The souls who live there will rise from height to height, and in that ordered progression pain and mental suffering will be lost for ever. Thus it is that the sanctified relationships which will alone survive this earthly life, and those so strongly fixed here, will increase in strength and purity in the spiritual life beyond. "*He which began a good work in you, will perfect it, until the day of Jesus Christ.*" †

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* S. Luke xx. 36. † Phil. i. 6, R. V.

And now another proposition presents itself to us. What becomes of the heathen, who have never heard the Name of Christ, when death claims them? In the 18th Article we have a definite statement. "*They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law and the light of Nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.*"

S. Augustine declares, "*Faith it is that doth commend the work of God; for whether thou wilt or no, that work that cometh not of faith is naught; where the faith of Christ is not the foundation, there is no good work, what building soever we make.*"

Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, S. Chrysostom and many others held the Patristic axiom "*extra ecclesiam nulla salus.*"

It was only that, very much later in her history, the Church threw off this burdensome incubus of belief, when it so totally opposed the great principles of justice and right. We cannot ignore the plain saying of S. Paul, "*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*"*

That millions upon millions of heathen people should be consigned to endless perdition and indescribable torment, through no fault of their own, but because they have never recognised the Son of Man, through ignorance of man's salvation, is to bring about a fearful shock to our moral and spiritual natures. It is to represent the Heavenly Father as a fiend worse if anything than Satan himself, a Being who could only hope for a stubborn rebellion on the part of man, and

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* Rom. ii. 6.

who could openly defy him for his frightful cruelty and monstrous devilry.

Fortunately there is no need for us to believe that God has ever or will ever act in such a way. No, not even when we hear our Divine Master's own declaration, "*He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.*"* Nor yet again when S. Luke proclaims, "*Neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.*"† We do not for a moment question the truth of either of these quotations. Where the mistake has arisen and spread all down the centuries is due to the fact that the Gospels and Epistles were written entirely for the baptised, or Christians. Heathen nations who knew not Christ, could not possibly come under the chastising words of the Master and His apostles. Such people never received any of the blessings of the Militant Church of Christ, nor could the thought ever arise that they must be signalled out for punishment, for something they knew not to be wrong. Every statement in the New Testament is for Christians and for no one else. Nevertheless, even they, the heathen, must believe in the Name of Jesus if they would be saved. And if salvation is impossible in this life, then it must take place in Purgatory.

It does not follow from this, that every heathen man and woman must necessarily be saved. There must be a standard to which every heathen must attain, just as there is with every Christian; and to fall below that standard means to lose the gift of eternal salvation. When the souls of the heathen, at death, pass into Purgatory, they will be taught the truth of the Gospel.

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* S. Mark xvi. 16. † Acts iv. 12.

Our Lord preached the Gospel to the dead, as was shewn when He passed with the penitent thief into Hades, and revealed the glorious truth to the antediluvians.*

Later still S. Peter undoubtedly maintains that the Gospel was preached to others over a time which was not limited. *" For unto this end was the Gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."*†

One other reference would seem to claim that the heathen should receive the message of the Gospel before the end.

" And this gospel of the Kingdom, shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony unto all the nations; and then the end shall come."‡

It seems almost evident, then, that in Purgatory, the Holy Spirit of God will conduct the Gospel to those who are in need of it. Likewise the holy angels must perform similar functions in their ceaseless ministries. And who would deny but that the souls of men in the higher spheres of Purgatory, may not be concentrated in preaching to those on the lower spheres, even to the heathen, and thereby assisting them until they obtain the Vision of God? Many holy men and women whose sole aim in this earthly life has been the extension of Christ's Kingdom, have in a moment been transplanted to that world of spirits. The loss from every point of view seems irrevocable, until we understand that in all probability they have been called to a higher and more extensive work, where their ministries would result in a richer fruition.

But what shall we say of the heathen who frequent

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* 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20. † 1 Pet. iv. 6.
‡ S. Matt. xxiv. 14.

our cities? Is there any hope of salvation when the voice of death calls them? We shall see.

There are millions of the baptised who have had boundless opportunities of shewing zeal for their Lord, who have not only wilfully neglected them, but have scornfully resisted God's proferred grace. For them *" there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin."* *

A difference must obviously be made between this type of man and the other, who perchance has never heard of Christ, nor ever had the Gospel displayed except in so far that by its caricature it violated his moral sense. With the former, the words of Holy Scripture are definite and convincing. *" It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandments delivered unto them."*† *Or, " it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away to renew them again unto repentance."*‡ These, it would appear, having had their probation given to them in this life, can never look for a second probation in Purgatory.

But apart from these Biblical references, it must be clear to all that a second and new opportunity of obtaining Eternal Life would destroy our highest thoughts of Almighty God. Where would be the incentive to strive for holiness in the face of a bitter and never-ending persecution, if beyond the grave we all commenced afresh and on the same base? What would be the use of regenerating the savage? Why not leave him alone to enjoy life as he has always known it, if he enters at death upon a new life which can have

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* Heb. x. 26. † 2 Pet. ii. 21. ‡ Heb. iv. 4-6.

no communion with the present one? The ideas of fresh chances and opportunities, except to those whose earthly life has missed them, is strictly condemned by Jesus Christ in His teaching. "*Preach the Gospel to every creature.*"* It is a duty which, as disciples of our Lord, we must see accomplished.

The Church of God throughout the centuries has woefully neglected her duty. She has sinned deeply. Millions of heathen have died without the Word, simply through our fault. But that fault in the eyes of an All-Righteous God will never allow them to be placed under the slightest disability. Critics are to be found who resist this conclusion, because, as they say, it would place the heathen in an advantageous or unfair position in the world beyond. They have a chance of beginning afresh.

How shall we answer such people? Do they actually believe that even amidst all our spiritual warfare, the joy of Christ's presence counts for nothing? Is not that spiritual Vision of God, though it is only seen through a glass darkly, an infinitely greater compensation than to live for three score years and ten, without experiencing a single ray of light (which would illuminate the soul) as coming from a God of Love? At any rate, ask such a critic whether, with all the pseudo-disadvantages of the Christian here on earth, he would change his lot with the savage? There may be all kinds of inequalities and perplexities in this world; nay more, this principle of inequality would seem to run through all God's dispensations. When they become too personal, man is inclined to speak of the injustice of God, but that is only because he has not the full purpose and plan of life stretched out before his eyes,

* S. Mark xvi. 15.

that he might see. That God is the embodiment of Justice, is an axiom. That we cannot embrace it within our mental ken does not break the truth, but only serves to shew how insignificant the human mind must be.

"*Tried by results, the Church is a failure,*" is a common expression on the lips of worldly men to-day. How foolish! According to such reasoning the very Son of God was a failure. No, that kind of argument will not do. In the world of to-day, there is ample evidence to show that the Church Militant is making stupendous victories. But what of that invisible army and innumerable, the Church Expectant, which is in union with the Church of Earth? Add to that the Church Triumphant, with its Triune God, the holy angels, the blessed saints and the spirits of just men made perfect, and the forces of Satan and his satellites even within the range of time must suffer ignominious destruction.

To conclude the matter. A righteous judgment presupposes of necessity an adequate probation. If this has been withheld from any man in this world, then an opportunity, another chance will be given him after death. To those who, in God's judgment, ought reasonably to have accepted His revelation, but on the contrary have resisted it, trampling it under foot, the consequence of condemnation must inevitably be eternal. There can be no new probation granted, the door of penitence must irrevocably be closed. Still we are not left without a ray of hope for many whom we are inclined to think are lost. It does not come within our capacity to know what is an adequate presentment of the truth to every man. We have no means of measuring how great are the forces of prejudice and irregular intellectual movements in destroying the

brightness of the Father's glory. We cannot estimate the number of the saved. God alone knows that. He is eternally True and Righteous whose Will is that *no man should perish.**

* 2. Pet. iii. 9.

CHAPTER VI

Prayers for the Dead

THERE is nothing more sure than this, that the souls in Purgatory continue their religious exercises. The worship, which includes prayers, had commenced in the life on earth, and had possibly continued throughout the whole of that life, until death separated soul from body.

It would appear, therefore, that the most obvious thing for the soul to do in that world of spirits, would be to continue the practice.

Nay, it would be necessary to pray for God's aid in the work of Purgatorial cleansing, that greater zeal be given to crush the power of sin, and thus make it possible to rise from height to height. "*He which began a good work in you, will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ,*" * that is, will continue His help not only in this life, but through the life in Purgatory.

For this help we must plead, for it is only achieved by the offering of prayer to God. Similarly do we believe that the souls in Purgatory pray for us. In the conversation in the parable, between Abraham and Dives, we certainly know this, that the rich man still

* Phil. i. 5, R. V.

retained his memory and petitioned the patriarch for his brothers. "*I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him* (*Lazarus*) *to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.*" *

It is no argument to say that because the prayer was unanswered, it was therefore illegal; for such a conclusion would strike back on our own practice of prayer, and render it futile. Many of our prayers are never answered, simply because they are not in compliance with the Will of God. This does not cause us to cease praying, but rather enhances our enthusiasm to pray only for the things which we know God can answer. But apart from this, it is only natural to believe that the disembodied soul with the full power of remembrance, would strive to help us on by means of prayer just as we do for them who have passed through death into life. We do not pray *to* these souls, but *for* them.

We might settle this question of 'prayers for the dead' in a very few words. Our God in whom we believe is the God of earth and heaven; yet "*God is not the God of the dead but of the living.*" † From this it is obvious that we continue to live after the death of the body; and since the soul still lives unimpaired by this process, it claims our prayers still, just as though it were living on earth. A community of human beings are living together; they pray for each other. Suddenly one of their number is called away by death. He is not in reality dead, but has merely cast off an outer garment, his body, which if anything has caused his vitality to become infinitely strengthened. Do we cease

* S. Luke xvi. 27, 28, R.V.
† S. Matt. xxii. 32, R.V.

to pray for that soul, because we fail to see its presence ? By no means. It in no way changes the practice of continuing in that holy duty. To cease the habit would cause us to repudiate the doctrine of the ' *Communion of Saints* ', to contradict the truth that there is a continuity between the ' militant church of Earth,' through the ' expectant church of Purgatory,' up to the ' triumphant church of God's Heaven.'

Now let us see how this Catholic practice is supported on every side by impregnable evidence. The Jews who lived a hundred and fifty years before Christ prayed for their dead. We have this on the testimony of Judas Maccabeus who refers to this devotion. " *For if we had not hoped, that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead.*" * It was continued in early Christian days, as may be seen on the Jewish tombs in the catacombs. Nor has this practice ever been abandoned ; for it is revealed in their regular religious offices.

In making this reference, it is not to be assumed that it affords any antecedent reason why Christians, as such, should adopt this devotion, but it is merely mentioned as an historical fact. At the same time we must clearly recognise that Jesus Christ, being a Jew, one who constantly went up to the Temple and Tabernacle for prayer, would without doubt have severely censured and forbidden the practice of ' Prayers for the dead,' if it had been in the least way blameworthy. He certainly prohibited many things in the religious life of the Jew, but never this.

What has the primitive Church to say of such a custom ? On every hand there is a harmonious belief that such prayers are not only legitimate but necessary.

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* 2 Macc. xii. 44.

The liturgies of *S. James*, *S. Mark*, and *S. Clement*, all of them going back, in part at least, to the very days of the apostles; all, without exception contain such prayers.

Tertullian who died about 220 A.D. at a great age, speaks of the practice as usual in his time, and never hints that it was an innovation.

S. Cyprian, the great martyr (258 A.D.), makes a similar statement.

The custom is recommended by a long string of saints, amongst whom are found these, gathered from the most illustrious. *S. Ambrose* (397 A.D.), *S. Jerome* (420 A.D.), *S. Augustine of Hippo* (430 A.D.), *S. Cyril of Jerusalem* (386 A.D.), and *S. Chrysostom* (407 A.D.).

Coming to nearer times, the Church of England once fully and very definitely taught the doctrine. It was after the Reformation, in the first Prayer Book of Edward VI. (1549), and even now in the Book of to-day, such prayers are still to be found. Here are a few references. In the Litany we say "*Remember not Lord . . . the offences of our forefathers*"; we also pray for help and mercy not only "*in the hour of death, but in the Day of Judgment.*" In the Office of the Eucharist, in the prayer for the Church Militant, when commemorating those departed in the faith and fear of God, we ask "*that we* WITH THEM, *may be partakers of God's heavenly kingdom.*"

In the Burial Office there is a very striking passage in one of the prayers, when we say "*that we*, WITH ALL THOSE THAT ARE DEPARTED IN THE TRUE FAITH OF THY HOLY NAME, *may have our perfect consummation and bliss.*" So too, in the Bidding Prater of the Canons of 1603, a prayer always recited by the preacher, before he commences his sermon before

the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge on every Sunday during term time, occur these words. "*Finally, let us praise God* FOR ALL THOSE WHICH ARE DEPARTED OUT OF THIS LIFE, IN THE FAITH OF CHRIST, *and pray unto God, that we have grace to direct our lives after their good examples, that this life ended, we may be made partakers* WITH THEM *of the glorious resurrection in the life everlasting.*"

Amongst the great names which adorn the history of the English Church, there are not a few who never had the slightest qualm as to the validity of this holy rite. *Archbishop Usher*, the most learned Low Churchman, who ever held a see in this country, is here at one with Bishops *Lancelot Andrewes, John Overall, Richard Montague, Jeremy Taylor, Gilbert Sheldon, Isaac Barrow* and *George Bull.*

As a legal question, the matter was settled many years ago in the Court of Arches, by its then competent judge, Sir H. T. Fust, when in the action of Woolfrey *v.* Brecks, an unsuccessful attempt was made to compel the removal of an inscription on a tombstone, whereon the doctrine was expressed.

But we may be asked, apart from the Apocryphal reference, is there no Biblical evidence to a practice which has enslaved all Catholic Christendom? There is one, attributable to S. Paul in his second epistle to Timothy. It is a petition, we should say, for the soul of Onesiphorus. The Apostle's words are worthy of careful consideration. "*The Lord grant unto him, that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day.*"* The peculiarity lies in the strangeness of the words. One would hardly speak of anyone in such language, if he were still in his earthly life. But there are other

* 2 Tim. i. 18.

references of a similar nature which bear upon this subject.

"*The Lord grant mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain.*"* "*Salute . . . and the house of Onesiphorus.*"† The two latter quotations as compared with the former one, merely refer to his household, and do not include Onesiphorus himself. The three passages have almost universally, and certainly most reasonably, been interpreted that Onesiphorus was dead; for had he been alive, the message would naturally have either included him or mentioned somewhat of his condition.

The question is sometimes asked—why did not our Blessed Lord say more about these prayers if they are of such consequence, and why is there not a single reference to them in the Gospel narrative? The reason is obvious. In the first place 'Prayers for the dead' was an acknowledged custom. None, in those days, was at all likely to denounce the practice, and therefore for our Lord to emphasise the necessity for such a type of prayer was quite unnecessary. He was preaching a Gospel to Jews, and although His Divine Message showed almost an infinite progression, it did not condemn the Jewish Faith as essentially wrong. It had its roots in the Ancient Faith of Israel.

Thus the Divine Teacher says in His Sermon on the Mount, "*Think not that I came to destroy the law and the prophets, I came not to destroy but to fulfil.*"‡ It was therefore evident that the fundamental truths of the Old Faith remained untouched, except in so far as corruption had crept in through the teachings of men. These irregularities, amounting in many instances to

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* 2 Tim. i. 16. † 2 Tim. iv. 19. ‡ S. Matt. v. 17.

wilful sins, were constantly declaimed by Christ. The Old Covenant had served its time, and the hour had arrived to form a new and a greater Covenant, built it is true, upon the old rock, but one which should embrace the whole world, and one which offered an Eternal Sacrifice performed once and for ever, and carried on from thence through innumerable generations of men in the Sacrifice of the Altar.

All that was true and lovely in the ancient faith was retained in the Gospel, but in Christ they were carried beyond their warped conceptions. A narrow, bigoted Pharisaism was smashed by the lightning truth of the Gospel, and men who had eyes to see, and ears to hear, saw and comprehended the magnificence of the Church of Christ. Jesus, God and Man, worshipped in the Jewish Church with its 'Prayers for the dead,' and though He despised and exposed much that was wrong, He never once mentioned that this practice was either unnecessary or unfavourable in the sight of God. That He would have done so, had there been cause, we can have no doubt; but since He and the inspired writers who immediately followed Him never seemed to have given it a thought, speaks volumes for its universal observance. Later, when the Church was capturing the Gentile world and had, unlike the Jew, to be taught the rudiments of the Christian Faith, then we begin to find in the writings of the Fathers without exception, monitions for their use and examples of such prayers.

But there remains another thought in this connection which claims for itself its due proportion of consideration. It is demonstrated most clearly throughout the teaching of the New Testament.

Christ's teaching, whether by precept or parable, with perhaps the exception of the parable of 'Dives and

Lazarus,' continually fixes the thoughts of His hearers on the Paradise of God—the consummation of the Blessed. He draws a distinct line, which can never be mistaken, between those who are saved and those who are lost. The one shall sit down at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, they shall pass into Everlasting Life, they shall gaze upon the Face of God; the other shall pass into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. The two extremes. The one, to be with God; the other, to dwell with the devil and his angels.

The proposition would seem to present itself in this way. The true Christian must have a love of souls, he must yearn for their salvation. An opportunity is presented him of speaking to a man, a heathen man, who knows not God. What would be the most natural course to adopt? He would speak to the man of his soul, of a spiritual life beyond the grave; where according to the character he has developed here, there will be ready for him a consummation of bliss or woe. Heaven with its immaculate holiness and not Purgatory is the one great influence which attracts the soul of such a man. He would point out to him the shining peaks of shimmering whiteness as they glisten and reflect the brightness of a powerful sun. Nothing inferior to this, to commence with. Perfection first, and the means to attain it later. Jesus was a true psychologist. That was the reason why He strove to make eternity a condition of endless attraction, to make men yearn for the splendour of God in a vision which should pass all human apprehension.

That is the reason why we believe in so many genuine truths and pious opinions; which, if we had to rely simply on the evidence of the four Evangelists, we should not find so universally held to-day in the whole

Catholic Church. One last question remains. For whom must we offer our prayers? There are several sections of Christians of whom we may speak in very definite terms. We are only concerned about those who have lived in this earthly life. Of these there are (1) *The Saints of God* who are already in heaven. These do not need our prayers, they have passed to their final consummation. (2) *The Lost*, those who have abandoned God, and are for ever alienated from gazing on His Glorious Presence. To pray for these would be useless. (3) *Infants*, who have been baptised and therefore know no sin, dwell in bliss with the Saints of God and are far beyond the range of human prayers. "*They are without fault before the throne of God.*" *

(4) *The Souls of men*, the inhabitants of Purgatory from the lowest to the highest spheres, need these prayers, so that the Almighty Father may answer as it seemeth best. But who are the Saints? And who are the lost? Except in well-authenticated instances, it is impossible for us to judge. We therefore pray for a universe of 'souls.'

The nature of these prayers must obviously be studied, so that our words shall not fall outside the limits of the Will of God; nor should we ask anything of a personal and implicit type, which would overreach its purpose.

Then there are foundation gifts which have a common application. These we may plead for, in sure and certain hope that such prayers will be heard. For examples of these prayers, the most common is the usual R.I.P. "May he rest in peace." For others "Pray for the soul of thy fellow-servant, that he may find mercy in the Day of Christ." "Do thou, reader,

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* Rev. xiv. 5.

pray for rest and a happy resurrection in Christ for him whose body lies below."

"Grant, O Lord, to us and to those who are departed, forgiveness of all our sins, and an ever-increasing knowledge of Thy Will."

CHAPTER VII

The Saints of God

It was a very great mistake when the English Church cut out of her calendar the Feast of All Souls (which was primitively held on November 2nd), and joined it to the feast of All Saints, which has always been commemorated the day before. Some writers have imagined that this action has broadened our vision of the meaning of the word 'saints' and that now we must include within that expression, the sum total of all the faithful departed. This, however, is quite wrong, Biblically wrong.

The Saints of God are in heaven. They reign in heavenly glory without having as yet attained their highest consummation.

S. Augustine says, "*We do not pray for the Martyrs, they are our advocates.*"

The other class, the 'All Souls,' comprise the inhabitants of Purgatory, who are not lost. Some of them are only 'just saved,' "*saved so as by fire.*" * Others, only repent upon their death beds after having lived lives of consummate wickedness. They pass into Purgatory, as we have already seen, and may advance to a condition of perfection, where they join the Saints in due course.

* 1 Cor. iii. 15.

We need hardly call the reader's attention to the fact that this belief is not accepted as it ought to be, even by many Christians who most strongly believe in the doctrine of the Intermediate Life. Their contention is that the meaning of the General Judgment is invalidated, if it be conceded that the Saints are *now* in glory. Such an argument is built upon fallacies. We hope to shew later that there never will be a General Judgment, as a judgment. The only judgment that we shall ever experience is the Particular Judgment at death, and which settles our position for eternity. The Church has never held that the Saints in glory *now* enjoy the Beatific Vision in such a manner, that no increase in light and glory is possible to them after the Day of Resurrection—the Last Day.

The upholders therefore of the defective theory of the Intermediate Life, which denies that the Saints reign *now* with Christ, assert, but without the least authority, that souls without bodies cannot enter heaven. S. John's vision of the *souls* of the martyrs 'under the altar' of heaven, is a sufficient answer to destroy that particular theory.

"I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held." * In our endeavour to be perfectly just in the treatment of this subject, we shall give certain Patristic evidence, which undoubtedly favours their views.

Tertullian says, *"How shall the soul arise like a vapour to heaven, while Christ is still sitting there at the Right Hand of the Father, when as yet the command of God has not been heard by the trumpet of the Archangel? Heaven is opened to none whilst the earth remains with its bars fastened."*

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* Rev. vi. 9.

This passage unfortunately proves too much, for since our Lord's Ascension, the bars of earth have been broken, and the *gates of heaven flung open to all believers.**

To quote him once more, he says, "*No one departing from the body, at once appears before the Lord, unless by the prerogative of martyrdom, that is to say, he is transferred to Paradise, and not to the place of souls departed.*" He unquestionably makes an exception here. In this he is in union with the universal belief of Catholic Christendom, which maintains that Paradise is not the 'Abraham's Bosom' of the Expectant Church but the heaven of the Church Triumphant.

Justin Martyr says, "*If you have fallen in with any persons called Christians who do not admit this (Resurrection of the body) but dare to blaspheme the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, and say that there is no resurrection of the dead, but that their souls, at the time of their death are taken up into heaven, do not regard them as Christians.*" There is little that this passage proves. Its main concern is in emphasising the truth of the Resurrection of the body and in clearly showing that in almost every case the souls of men must make the acquaintance of the Churches of Earth, Purgatory and Heaven.

S. Irenæus certainly affirms that "*the souls depart into a place unseen, appointed for them by God; and there they dwell until the Resurrection, waiting for the Resurrection; then receiving again their bodies, and rising complete, that is with their bodies, even as the Lord arose, thus shall they come unto the Vision of God.*" At first sight, these words would distinctly seem to support the theory of those who

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* Te Deum.

maintain that the Saints are not, as yet, in glory. The critical scholar, however, would never take an isolated passage, such as the above, from any writer, without knowing to whom and on what subject the argument is being expended.

S. Irenæus is addressing people who denied the redemption of the body, and at the same time is asserting the resurrection of the body against heretics. What in truth he is advocating, is that if the souls of men go straight to heaven, at the instant of death, our Lord's soul must also have passed to heaven from the Cross, leaving his body to the earth, without the processes of Resurrection and Ascension. His object then in writing is precisely similar to that of *Justin Martyr.* He is entirely engaged on confuting the heresy which denies the existence of the Church Expectant. And further, in manifesting the truth of the Intermediate Life, he rather oversteps the mark, as will be seen later in the writings of more illustrious Fathers, when he states that souls wait in a *'place unseen'* until the Resurrection. In other words, his exceeding zeal for the Church Expectant leads him to keep silence on the Church Triumphant. The 'Vision of God' may therefore refer to that still more exalted glory which the disembodied spirits of heaven will attain, when clothed upon with the body of the Resurrection.

Origen and Lactantius are two other witnesses which many people bring forward to substantiate the claims of those who deny the present existence of the Triumphant Church for human souls. But here, as before, their words are most ambiguous. With regard to the former, *Dr. Mason* in his 'Purgatory' says, *"It is hard to form a connected and systematic idea of Origen's belief with regard to the state of the faithful departed";* and *Bishop Bull* declares that *Lactantius "was a*

rhetorician not a theologian, and never at any time had a place among the doctors of the Church."

Let us now turn to the positive testimony of the Fathers, on the other side.

S. Clement of Rome, speaking of S. Peter, says, "*having suffered martyrdom he went to the place of glory due to him*" ; and that S. Paul "*departed from the world, and went to the Holy Place.*"

S. Polycarp (a disciple of S. John, the Apostle) in speaking of S. Paul and the other apostles, says, "*They are in the place due to them with the Lord.*" Notice the expressions '*in glory*' and '*with the Lord.*' These could not possibly be mistaken for dwellers in the Church Expectant or Abraham's Bosom, for at best they are only conditions of '*comfort.*'*

S. Ignatius speaks of his approaching martyrdom as 'attaining to God,' and of the inward water of life, saying to him, 'Go to the Father.'

Dionysius of Alexandria writes of the martyrs as now 'reigning with Christ and sharing His Kingdom.'

If we come down to the Fathers of a later period, we find similar teaching. *S. Jerome* who, with *S. Augustine,* is authoritatively quoted in the 39 Articles of the Book of Common Prayer, says, "*If the Apostles and Martyrs while still in the body could pray for others, when they still ought to be full of care for themselves, how much more can they do so after they have been crowned with victories and triumphs! One man, Moses, obtains pardon from God for six hundred thousand armed men, and Stephen, the imitator of the Lord and the first martyr in Christ, begs forgiveness for his persecutors ; and shall their power be less after they have begun to be* WITH CHRIST."

S. Augustine speaks of the Church Triumphant as

* S. Luke xvi. 25.

not needing our prayers, which are offered for the rest of the faithful in the Church Expectant.

He exclaims, "*The righteousness of the martyrs is perfect, because they have been perfected in their very act of martyrdom. For this reason, the prayers of the Church are not offered for them.*"

S. Ambrose speaks in similar language concerning the martyrs.

S. Gregory the Great is asked whether the souls of the just are received into heaven before the resurrection of the body. He replies, "*We cannot affirm or deny this of the souls of the righteous as a whole. For there are souls of the righteous kept out of the Heavenly Kingdom, for what reason except that they are not yet made perfect! But nevertheless it is clearer than daylight, that the souls of just men made perfect, after they are delivered from their carnal prisons, are immediately received into their heavenly places; which the Very Truth Himself attests when He saith 'Wheresoever the Body is, there will the eagles be gathered together,' because where our Redeemer Himself is in Body, there, without any doubt, will the souls of the just be gathered together. Moreover, Paul desired to be dissolved and to be with Christ. Whoever, then, does not doubt that Christ is in heaven neither let him deny that the soul of Paul is in heaven.*"

S. Gregory of Nazianzen, in his funeral oration on S. Basil, says, "*He now abides in Heaven, and there, as I think offers sacrifice on our behalf, and prays for the people; for so he did not leave us, as to have left us altogether.*"

S. Gregory of Nyssa thus invokes *S. Ephraem*, "*Do thou, standing by the Divine Altar, and ministering in company with angels to the All-Holy Trinity, the source of life, remember all of us, asking for us remission of sins and enjoyment of the Eternal Kingdom.*"

S. Cyril of Jerusalem divides the faithful departed into two classes; those for whom the Holy Sacrifice is offered in commemoration, namely, the Saints of the Church Triumphant, who intercede *for us;* and those for whom it is offered by way of supplication, namely the souls of the Church Expectant for whom *we intercede.*

The Anglican reformers of 1549 prepared the Liturgy entirely on these lines. There was a commemoration and a thanksgiving for the Church Triumphant and a prayer of intercession for the Church Expectant. This was certainly omitted in the 2nd Prayer Book of 1552, but the doctrine never changed. In fact, the Reformers of 1552 never once condemned the Book of 1549. The Canon of 1549 is as follows:

"*And here do we give unto Thee, Most High, praise and hearty thanks for the wonderful grace and virtue declared in all Thy Saints from the beginning of the World; and chiefly in the glorious and most blessed Virgin, Mother of Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and God, and in the holy Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs, whose examples, O Lord, and steadfastness in Thy Faith and keeping Thy Holy Commandments, grant us to follow.*"

Then follows the prayer for the *Church Militant:* "*We commend unto Thy mercy all other Thy servants, which are departed hence from us with the sign of Faith, and now do rest in the sleep of peace. Grant unto them, we beseech Thee, Thy mercy and everlasting peace, and that at the Day of the General Resurrection, we and all they which be of the mystical Body of Thy Son, may altogether be set on His right Hand, and hear that His most joyful Voice 'Come unto Me, O ye that be blessed of My Father,*" etc.

Now let us direct our thoughts to the present glory of the Saints of God.

The Blessed Virgin and the Saints are in heaven and reign with Christ, and are "*without fault before God's throne.*"*

Their present condition is beautifully expressed in Bishop Wordsworth's hymn:

'*Now they reign in heavenly glory, now they walk in golden light,*
Now they drink as from a river, holy bliss and infinite;
Love and peace they taste for ever, and all truth and knowledge see
In the Beatific Vision of the Blessed Trinity.'

The bishop does not for one moment deny the increase of glory that will accrue to the Saints after the General Resurrection, which is strictly in accordance with the teachings of *S. Bernard* and *S. Thomas Aquinas;* for the former in speaking of the Saints '*under the Altar*' declares that they will be exalted '*above the Altar*' after the final Resurrection. We admit therefore that the souls of the Church Triumphant, another name for which is "*the spirits of just men made perfect,*"† can only enjoy the Vision of the Face of God so far as the disembodied state allows.

But this leads us to another question, which demands explanation. We are told in the page of Holy Writ that some of the Saints in the Church Triumphant are not in a disembodied state. Can there be any increase of glory when at the Resurrection the disembodied souls of heaven arrayed in the spiritual bodies, and the inhabitants of the Church Expectant similarly attired, enter into the holiness of God? Can there, we ask, be

* Rev. xiv. 5. † Heb. xii. 23.

any increase of joy and felicity to such Saints as Enoch and Elijah when the glory of heaven is complete? It would seem most probable; for what does heaven's supreme triumph mean? It is the vindication of God's justice before the world, the final victory of the Church Militant and Church Expectant, and the wonderful passing of the Mediatorial Kingdom of Christ, into the Eternal Kingdom of the Father when God shall be '*all in all.*'

Such a magnificent change from the holy to the holiest, must move every created being. Angels and Archangels and all the company of heaven, even the embodied souls of the Church Triumphant, will be exalted to higher spheres still, from whence they will gaze with a clearer vision on the indescribable brightness of the Father's face.

This is no idle opinion, for in that heaven is formed an united fellowship. Without union there is weakness and distress, for "*if there is one member of the Church who suffers, all the other members suffer with him.*"*

Or to take that wonderful passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews:

"*God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us, should not be made perfect.*"† Surely these words must mean that every Christian helps, in some degree, to create a condition of perfection. We are dependent one upon another. Thus when heaven is filled with a sanctified creation, a creation in perfect unity, there will be such an increase of majestic joy from what prevails at present, as to stagger the imagination of both angels and men. Let us for a moment retrace our steps to the consideration of those two Old Testament Saints—Enoch and Elijah. They both,

* 1 Cor. xii. 26. † Heb. xi. 40.

by the Will of God, passed from earth to heaven without the need of entering the Church Expectant.

" *And Enoch walked with God : and he was not ; for God took him.*"*

" *Enoch was translated that he should not see death ; and was not found, because God had translated him ; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.*"†

" *And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that behold there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder ; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind unto heaven.*"‡

In addition there is also the mystery concerning the body of Moses, who most certainly died, but was buried by God. " *So Moses, the servant of the Lord died there in the Land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor ; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.*"§ With Elijah at the Transfiguration of our Lord, Moses was manifested to those chosen apostles, Peter, James and John, in his glorified body. " They were the two," says *Archbishop Trench*, " of whom one had not died." " *O Elias, who wast taken up in a whirlwind of fire, and in a chariot of fiery horses,*"‖ and the other had no sooner tasted of death, than probably his body was withdrawn from under the dominion of death, and of him that had the power of death. " *Yet Michael the Archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said ' The Lord rebuke thee.' ""***

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* Gen. v. 24. † Heb. xi. 5. ‡ 2 Kings ii. 11.
§ Deut. xxxiv. 5, 6. ‖ Ecclus. xlvii. 9.
** Jude 9.

In a discussion between Bishop Andrewes and Cardinal Bellarmine, as to whether Enoch and Elijah are in their glorified bodies now, the Cardinal rejected the view that they ever passed into heaven before our Lord's Ascension. In support of his view he quoted the words of the Gospel, "*No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven.*"* The bishop's reply was that to 'ascend' is altogether different from being 'assumed' or 'translated.' To ascend into heaven, by his own power, belongs to Christ alone, and that the passage cannot be pressed, so as to exclude both Enoch and Elijah from heaven. Bishop Andrewes' conclusion therefore is, that these two Old Testament Saints are in heaven with their glorified and spiritual bodies.

S. Irenæus places Enoch and Elijah in the 'third heaven' or 'paradise'—the Church Triumphant, into which S. Paul was caught up and heard unspeakable words.† With him concur such writers as *Tertullian, S. Epiphanius, S. Jerome,* and the Fathers generally. A comment on the third heaven at this stage may not be out of place. It has generally been thought that the *first heaven* refers definitely to the firmament or atmosphere of the earth, in which the birds and flying creatures find their means of transport.

The second heaven reaches to and embraces within its folds the most distant stars, every object within it being unquestionably materialistic.

The *third heaven* is the abode of God, the highest heaven where the hierarchies of angels, and the saints of God, for ever chant the everlasting Hymn of Praise.

But to proceed. S. Matthew *alone* tells us that a

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* S. John iii. 13. † 2 Cor. xii. 2-4.

most striking phenomenon occurred on the day of our Lord's Resurrection. Christ's resurrection was accompanied by the resurrection of many of the Saints in Jerusalem. "*And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His Resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.*"* Simply because S. Matthew alone relates this incident, we find no cause for its rejection on the plea that it is unauthentic evidence; for it must be remembered that S. John alone tells us of the raising of Lazarus.

The Fathers consider that the Old Testament Saints who were glorified by our Lord's visit to Hades, were included in this resurrection related by S. Matthew. Further, this resurrection may have been willed by God, to confirm the faith of those to whom they appeared. They came to those who could testify to their identity and impart the truth to others.

Cornelius à Lapide believed that certain of the saints of the Old Testament rose with our Lord, as well as saints recently departed, such as *S. Joseph, Simeon, Anna,* and *S. John Baptist.*

Origen says, "*Those that then rose did not again die.*" It was therefore no transitory rising, no return to their graves. That the saints of God are now in heaven seems to us abundantly proved. It is also quite clear that Enoch, Elijah, and the saints who arose at our Lord's Resurrection are even now in the Church Triumphant, with their spiritual bodies. Their position in God's heaven is thus superior to the spirits of '*just men made perfect,*'† inasmuch as they are even now not '*unclothed*' but '*clothed upon.*'‡

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* S. Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. † Heb. xii. 23.
‡ 2 Cor. v. 2.

Not a little confusion has been rendered by many Anglican writers on this and kindred subjects. They talk as though the Intermediate Life were the very epitome of bliss; endless rejoicings, recognitions and eternal unions. In other words they have taken all heaven's characteristics and applied them to a world of imperfect souls which Mozley describes as the 'gloomy catacombs' of the Church Expectant.

CHAPTER VIII

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

At this stage, we cannot leave the study of the Church Triumphant and those heavenly bodies who constitute it, without thinking of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the human mother of our Divine Lord, and her position at this present moment in God's order of things. There is hardly any historical evidence which bears upon the subject, it is true. But in accordance with the great analogies of God, supplemented with *à priori* reasoning, we are enabled to open out great fields of research, which otherwise would have escaped us.

Many people are a little suspicious concerning this form of argument, but let it be observed that no other method of reasoning was known to the world from Aristotle to Bacon. And for one to say, that during so long a period of time, with the deductive process of argument solely to hand, there had been no acquisition of knowledge, would be to state something which was entirely ludicrous and untrue. The *à posteriori* or inductive method of reasoning, depends entirely on experience, but for one who will take the trouble to study the two methods, he will find that they are virtually included, the one in the other.

Further, the *à posteriori* argument would rule out as unbelievable the Immaculate Conception and the

Assumption of the Virgin, through lack of experience to base the argument on. And it is a little difficult to understand how such reasoning would help anyone in his adoption of the canonical truth of the Virgin Birth.

To argue deductively means that having before you the whole scheme and purpose of God towards mankind in the Incarnation, and having a knowledge of the attributes of God, you can arrive at decisions which cannot be disproved, and which bear upon their face every sign of truth. In such a way will the truth of the Assumption of the Virgin be treated, and her position in heaven firmly established.

Let us look at the subject from the broadest possible point of view.

If, as we have seen, God has honoured Enoch, Elijah and Moses besides the saints who rose at Christ's Resurrection, and added to these many others, such as the apostles and martyrs and that great apostle of the Gentiles, S. Paul, who even when on earth was caught up and had a glimpse of the third heaven, even the paradise of God, how could such an honour be withheld from the Mother of God? Such a conclusion is unthinkable.

She certainly, beyond every other saint in God's created universe, is worthy of the highest honour of all, if for no other reason than the unique and ineffable privilege of her divine maternity. To-day, the preponderating majority of Christians holds this belief. The whole of Catholic Christianity accepts it. The thirty-five millions of the Anglican Communion, it is true, have officially ceased to observe August 15th in memory of the "*Passing of the Blessed Virgin in body and soul to glory*," yet this by no means implies that there are not millions of Anglicans at the present time, who

hold this truth with all the fervour of a Latin or a Greek Catholic.

Bishop Cosin explains the omission of the Festival in the Book of Common Prayer, simply on account of the unhistorical character of the Apocryphal account of the Assumption; and not because he was at all dissatisfied with the potency of the *à priori* theological reasons. In connection with the attitude of *Bishop Cosin* towards the truth of the Assumption, it is a most remarkable fact that his contemporary, *Bishop Ken*, in his "Christian Year" should write of the Virgin in these words:

> *"Heaven with transcendent joy her entrance graced,*
> *Next to His Throne, her Son His Mother placed;*
> *And here below, now she's of Heaven possessed,*
> *All generations are to call her bless'd."*

Bishop Pearson is plainly in no doubt. He says the Blessed Virgin is in heaven with her Lord. The full quotation is as follows: *"If Elizabeth cried out with so loud a voice 'Blessed art thou among women' when Christ was but newly conceived in the womb, what expressions of honour and admiration can we think sufficient, now that Christ is in heaven and that Mother with Him?"*

Blunt's Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology contains this note. After dealing with the certainty that many bodies of the saints which slept arose at our Lord's resurrection, there is found this continuation *"Thus there is no* à priori *difficulty in the way of supposing that the body of S. Mary arose from the grave shortly after death. . . . It would also seem very fitting that the holy body which was the vehicle of so mighty an event as the Incarnation of God, should be preserved from the corruption of the grave, and should be at once received into that Blessed Place, where He, who had taken His*

Manhood of its substance, had Himself gone in His Manhood to dwell."

The Council of Bethlehem is in full agreement with the previous statement. *" For although she left that immaculate tabernacle of hers in the tomb, yet after three days, she was translated into heaven with her body, as Christ also was taken up."*

Mozley, speaking on the Assumption, says, *" The belief was never founded on that story (apocryphal) : the story was founded on the belief. The belief which was universal, required a definite shape, and that shape at length it found."* Proceeding, he remarks, *" We may think it a terrible presumption to place Mary and Joseph the carpenter . . . near the Throne of the Universe. But it would be a far more terrible presumption to place them anywhere else."*

It is acknowledged, then, that the belief in the *fact* of the Assumption was a theological conviction, based upon legitimate deductions from what God had already revealed concerning the unique position of the Virgin as Mother of God.

The Apocryphal book, which contains the account of the apostles witnessing the resurrection of the Blessed Virgin, is termed ' De transitu Mariæ ' and was falsely ascribed to *Melito of Sardis*. It was condemned in the decree of Pope Gelasius (A.D. 494). The truth of the Assumption is regarded as a ' *Silence of God,*' in which God hath not thought fit to acquaint the world with all the details of her passage. Another of these *silences* is recognised in the Assumption of Moses. But here with respect to the Virgin, Christ's manifestation of His love for her, is a sacred mystery of His Incarnation that immediately concerns His private relationship to her, and not the public relation of His Incarnate life to redeemed humanity in general.

Thus her Assumption to glory, for this reason alone, has never been regarded as a primary truth of revelation, but nevertheless a truth based upon legitimate and natural deductions from the primary truths of the Catholic Faith.

S, Epiphanius applies to the Blessed Virgin Mary, one of the Visions of the Apocalypse. He says, "*S. John tells us that the dragon hastened against the Woman who had brought forth the man-child, and there were given to her the wings of an eagle.*" *

Thus it comes to pass that to disbelieve this doctrine is more difficult than to accept it. For theology teaches us that because of the Virgin's nearness to God in virtue of her being the predestined and willing instrument of His Incarnation, it must necessarily follow that every honour that can by God's Will, legitimately accrue to a created being, rightly belongs to her whom "*all generations shall call blessed.*" From the Virgin's own lips the words proceeded "*for He that is mighty hath magnified me.*" † Add to this the supreme fact that she was sinless, which alone would raise her far beyond the level of the saints, who have already been received into heaven with their bodies, and we are convinced that her body must be specially honoured in that celestial sphere now, and demands an adoration only less than the worship of God.

It could only be a crude and narrow-minded theology that would definitely ignore and abhor such a truth as this. The Assumption has been preserved in the Catholic Church, as the great Depositary of Eternal Truth, and handed down to her children through successive generations. It is one of the commonest characteristics of human nature to crave for the details

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* Rev. xii. 13, 14. † Magnificat.

of an event, which is obviously beclouded in silence and mystery. There is nothing inherently wrong in such an attitude, provided that the enquiry be carried on along well-regulated lines of research. But when a plain truth is clothed in fictional dress to ensure its acceptance in the world, then obviously the truth must suffer.

This has been the case with the truth of the Assumption of the Virgin. There was no need of any legendary story to support its claim. From purely theological considerations alone, it ought to have obtained a ready welcome from the whole of Christendom. That it has not done so, is entirely attributable to the creation of the legend and to its advertisement within the Church. There are some people who reject the Feast of Assumption because it was never referred to in early Patristic evidence and was never observed by the Church until the end of the sixth and beginning of the seventh centuries. The reason for this is a perfectly simple one.

We must emphasise this fact once more. The truth is, at best, but a secondary one. It can in no wise compete with those primary and fundamental truths as established in the Creeds. We should hardly expect to it occupy the mind of the Church during the time of the Christological controversies which cover the Council period, and until Gnosticism in every form was finally condemned. The Church historian will have a ready knowledge, that so far from thinking how best the Virgin should be honoured, the Church had a bewildering opposition to break in the face of the Arian, Nestorian, and Eutychian heresies, which demanded all her zeal and energy, even to establish S. Mary's position as '*Mother of God*' and all its implications. This surely ought to afford a complete answer to that particular difficulty.

The great Protestant difficulty is that the doctrine of the Assumption has been the source of that undue praise and worship and exaggerated devotions which are accorded the Holy Mother in the Church of the Latin Obedience. We hold no brief for Rome, but we are quite sure of the truth when we state that it was not through the Assumption that the Church of Rome has so lamentably fallen away from the early traditions and conceptions of the Virgin Mary. Rome's degeneracy is accounted for in her failure to hold the primary and fundamental truths of the Divine Son and Holy Mother as established by the early Councils of the Undivided Church. She has untrue conceptions both of Christ and His Mother, but this in no wise affords an obstacle to the Catholic belief that the Blessed Mary is even now glorified both in body and soul, and dwells with All Saints in the Kingdom of her Lord.

CHAPTER IX

The Communion of Saints

THE Church of Christ at her inception regarded every baptised member of her flock as a saint. You need not look beyond the Epistles of S. Paul to corroborate this statement. He addressed his letters to the '*saints*' at Rome, Corinth, and Galatia. The Apostle's idea was undoubtedly to draw a line of demarcation between those who had joined the Church, those who were '*called*,' the '*elect*,' the '*saints*,' and that far larger band of men who were in the world and of the world—the heathen, those who had failed to recognise Christ. Later on, as we have already seen, the word 'saint' took on another meaning.

It was not used indiscriminately of all Christians, but only of those who had advanced to the highest peaks of holiness and had entered into that very select community of angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, even into the Church Triumphant. The rest of mankind were either making their election sure in the Church Militant of earth, or in the Church Expectant of Purgatory.

Now these three branches of the Holy Catholic Church were never intended to be like water-tight compartments, separated, the one from the other, so

that the inhabitants of one Church were prevented from taking the least interest in the lives of those located in the other two. The divisions which separated them were purely arbitrary. Constantly there is a continuous stream of human souls passing from the Expectant Church to the Church Triumphant. There is a wonderful connection between the three parts; and as must necessarily follow, each individual Christian has a duty not merely to those in his own branch of God's Church, but in addition to those who are dwelling in the other two sections.

This doctrine is known to us as the '*Communion of Saints*.' From its position in the Apostle's Creed where it follows immediately upon our assertion of the '*Holy Catholic Church*, its evident purpose is to remind us that our thoughts of that Church must not be limited to the confines of earth. This doctrine therefore gives us a magnificent vision of the Church of God. But we may be asked, in what lies our duty? It is to be found in commemoration and prayer.

First of all, however, let us notice how this belief portrays the intimate relationship which must exist in the Church between her members. "*None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.*"* "*Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the Body of Christ and members in particular.*"† The angels in heaven are affected by the conduct of the Church Militant, and if they, then surely the saints of God who are with them. "*The angels . . . rejoice over one sinner that repenteth.*"‡ If, therefore, we can add to their joy, it is a simple corollary to affirm that we can lessen their bliss.

* Rom. xiv. 7. † 1 Cor. xii. 26, 27.
‡ S. Luke xv. 7.

Thus, in this larger conception of the Church, we see an added responsibility which rests upon every individual member. We must use the only method God has given us for aiding those who have passed beyond the veil, namely by prayer, prayer for the dead, a most necessary duty and one that becomes imperative in the light of our '*Communion*' with the Saints. And if we may and must pray for them, we cannot possibly believe that they never pray for us. Dives in Purgatory, still remembered his father's house on earth and pleaded for his brethren. The prayer was not answered, it is true, but only because of its illegitimacy, which illegality consisted in the form of the prayer, namely, the particular way in which he hoped that the prayer would be heard. We do not know their special needs, but this does not prevent us from invoking the Father, that additional grace may be given to aid them in their work of purification and fight for perfection. And if *we* may do this, why not *they* in the Church Expectant?

This particular doctrine of the 'Communion of Saints' would fix our thoughts on the Church Triumphant, on the Saints in Glory. Do they pray for us, and do we pray *to* them? We do not pray *for* them, for they have even now received their inheritance. We commemorate them. The subject may be divided into two parts. The Intercession of the Saints and the Invocation of the Saints. The latter, it need hardly be said, entirely rests upon the truth of the former.

"*The Intercession of the Saints*"

In Old Testament days we find the first glimmer of this doctrine shewing itself in the writings of the

prophets. *"Though Moses and Samuel stand before Me, My mind is not towards this people."** It is immaterial that the intercession was unavailable; the fact remains that God revealed to His prophet Jeremiah, that intercession was possible. But Saul, the king of Israel, does at Endor, actually interview the spirit of Samuel on current events, centuries before the coming of Jesus Christ.†

Merely for the sake of historical reference, we may turn to two of the Apocryphal books, and find the custom firmly acknowledged. Raphael, the angel, speaks, *"When thou didst pray, I offered thy prayer unto the Lord."*‡ And though this intercession is the intercession of an angel, the ministry of angels is so much akin to the intercession of the saints, that there need be no diffidence in accepting it as part of that great intercessory work of heaven, in which all members take their share, even the Divine Saviour Himself, the one great Mediator between God and man.

The second reference is found in the vision of Judas Maccabeus, in which he sees the high priest Onias and Jeremiah interceding for the people. *"And this was the vision: that Onias, who had been high priest, a virtuous and a good man, revered in conversation, exercised from a child in all points of virtue, holding up his hands, prayed for the whole body of the Jews. This done, in like manner, there appeared a man with gray hairs, and exceeding glorious, who was of a wonderful and excellent majesty. Then Onias answered saying 'This is a lover of the brethren, who prayeth much for the brethren and for the holy city, to wit, Jeremias the prophet of God.'"*§

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* Jer. xv. 1.
† 1 Sam. xxviii. 15-20.
‡ Tobit xii. 12.
§ 2 Macc. xv. 12, 14.

In the New Testament, the evidence is beyond controversy. *" And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having everyone of them harps and golden vials full of odours which are the prayers of the Saints."** The *' cloud of witnesses '* spoken of in the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, must not simply be regarded as *' spectators.'* That they are beyond all doubt, but much more.

" They are spectators," says *Westcott*, in his " Epistle to the Hebrews," *" who interpret to us the meaning of our struggle, and who bear testimony to the certainty of our success if we strive lawfully."*

Scotus in his criticism of the ' Intercession ' is slightly reserved. He says, *" it does not belong to the essence of blessedness, that the Saints hear our prayers, though it is probable that God Himself reveals them to them."* We do not wonder at his caution in treating of a subject so abstruse and so unfathomable. The Saints will never possess those powers and attributes which only obtain to the Godhead. Even if they be possessed by the highest intuitive powers, they can never read the human heart. *" Unto God alone are all hearts open, all desires known, and from Whom no secrets are hid."* (Collect for Purity in Eucharist.)

S. Thomas Aquinas, speaking of the saints in glory, says, *" But this is a part of their glory, that they give aid in the way of salvation, to those who stand in need of it ; for so they become workers with God, than which nothing is more divine."*

That they know our needs is evident ; just as the angels could not be our guardians without some knowledge as to our spiritual condition. The angel

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* Rev. v. 8.

who offers the incense of the saints' prayers, cannot be offering something of which he is ignorant ; *" the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the Saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand."**

S. Gregory Nazianzen seems in no doubt as to the additional knowledge vouchsafed by God to the saints. *" I am persuaded,"* he says, *" that the souls of the saints take cognisance of our affairs."*

Even *Canon Mason,* whose unorthodox opinions on many eschatological subjects are proverbial, can with courage say, *" S. Peter and S. Paul would not be the Apostles whose lives and writings we know, if they did not pray for the Church which was founded upon them. . . . Almost everything would be more tolerable than to suppose that we have no place in the loving intercessions of our fathers and brethren and friends, who have passed before us to be with Christ."*† He is unorthodox, even here, as the reader will clearly see, when he speaks of *' friends being with Christ '* (Christ is in paradise, friends are in Purgatory) ; but the quotation is given simply because he cannot ignore the practice of intercession. The doctrine of the ' Communion of Saints ' was inserted in the Creed at the beginning of the fifth century, and it has been thought that the cause which made it necessary was the heresy of *Vigilantius.* He attacked the doctrine of the Intercession of the Saints, the Veneration of the Martyrs and other well-established truths.

S. Jerome answered him by issuing a violent protest. *"You say in your book,"* he says, *" that whilst we are alive we can pray for each other ; but that when we are dead the prayers of none of us will be heard on behalf of another. . . . If the Apostles and Martyrs whilst still in the flesh*

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* Rev. viii. 4. † Mason's " Purgatory "

are able to pray for others when they still have reason to be anxious for their own safety, how much more can they pray after their crowns, their victories and their triumphs?"

The late *Professor Swete* held a contrary view, namely that the Donatist theory was responsible for the insertion of the 'Communion of Saints' into the Creed. This, however, does not interest us. All that we desire is abundant evidence as to the truth of that doctrine. *S. Augustine, S. Ambrose* and *S. Gregory of Nyssa,* each in turn gives an affirmative pronouncement as to its truth, and to its ready acceptance within the Catholic Church. The episode of the *Fathers of Chalcedon* (A.D. 451) is very striking. When news was brought of the martyred Flavian to the council, the assembled Fathers cried, *"Flavian lives after death. The martyr will pray for us." Proterius,* who had also met a violent death, was referred in the letter of the bishops to the *Emperor Leo* in which they said Proterius had been admitted into the army of martyrs, and they prayed that God would regard his intercessions and shew them mercy and favour.

Thorndike speaks of *Gregory the Great* and *Leo the Great,* and sums up their teaching in the following words: *"Neither is it to be doubted that the Saints in happiness pray for the Church Militant, and that they have knowledge thereof."* Of *S. Augustine he* says, *"He supposeth that Nebridius prayed for him being dead and expects benefits from S. Cyprian's prayers. He said afore that we are to be commended by the prayers of the Martyrs . . . and again the reason why they celebrated the memories of the Saints, he assigns that they might be partners in their merits, and be helped by their prayers."*

From all this evidence, one cannot but acknowledge the fact that the truth of the 'Intercession of the Saints'

has been profoundly held by the Church from the fourth century onwards.

"The Invocation of Saints"

It is an admitted fact that this doctrine cannot be substantiated by any reference from Holy Writ. The cry of S. Paul '*Brethren, pray for us,*'* can hardly be brought forth as evidence in favour of the practice; although, at the same time, it must be seen that there is nothing to prevent some notice being taken of it, since prayer prevails as the chief characteristic in the Churches Militant, Expectant and Triumphant. The Church Militant would become dead if ever it became so self-centred as to ignore intercession, and to become unwilling to respond to the cry of help from those of its weaker brethren. To pray for others, especially when we are asked, is one of the greatest joys of the Christian life. In our response to such a petition, we find the brightest elements in all Christian charity.

If the 'Communion of Saints' means anything at all, it must shew that the Communion is overwhelming in its capacity, that it has no limitations, and that it admits of no obscurity, for the path of prayer is clear from earth to heaven. In prayer, you have definite access to the Eternal Father through Jesus Christ our Lord. Yet it never strikes anyone as wrong, much less as minimising the honour and glory of God, when he asks a brother or the church of his community to assist him in his prayers, by praying for him. It is a most godly act, and inasmuch as the prayers of the church are better than his own, there is more reason to believe

* 1 Thess. v. 25.

that his prayers will be heard. "*Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him. . . . And the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*" *

In this is emphasised the power of the 'Communion.' Further, if a man may petition his earthly brother under Divine favour, why may he not, on exactly the same ground, petition a saint? If the latter be wrong, so must be the former. The truth of the 'Invocation' was entirely evolved from the belief in the 'Intercession.' When once it was realised that the saints of God were capable of presenting their prayers for others, so soon did it become an obvious corollary, that we might beseech even them for ourselves and others.

We have already said that we can obtain no direct evidence for the truth of the 'Invocation' in the New Testament, but have we any right to expect any? In those early days the disciples of our Lord had first to learn the doctrine of the 'Communion of souls on earth,' or in other words, that they were '*members one of another.*' † The full meaning of this, and of its far-reaching consequences, required considerable time for its acquisition. At that time also none or very few of the saints of the New Covenant had passed into the Church Triumphant. The Virgin Mary and most of the Apostles were living in the world, and it was only natural that the destination of the Old Testament saints would cause a certain bewilderment.

There is such a thing as 'progressive revelation,' and it has left its mark on the mind of the Church. The Creed put forward at Cæsarea cannot stand for one moment in importance with that of Nicæa; and still

* S. James v. 13, 14. † Eph. iv. 25.

the Nicene Creed (A.D. 325) was not completed then, nor yet at Constantinople (A.D. 381). And there were 'fundamental' truths, not grouped together into one concrete whole, until the fifth century. No wonder that 'secondary' truths, truths not necessary for salvation, did not receive a ready acceptance of the Catholic Church until long periods of time had elapsed.

But for those who still hold out for Biblical evidence, may we ask a question? Where is such evidence to be found, as we have asked before, for the Baptism of Infants, for the changing of Sabbath to Sunday, and for the practice of women receiving the Holy Communion? None whatever. Yet they are accepted universally to-day, without any comment, as customs of the Church. The first Patristic evidence on this subject is to be found in *Origen* (A.D. 225) who says, "*Intercession and thanksgiving may not only be offered to saints but to men.*" This passage has been differently interpreted. *Dean Luckock* believes that the Father meant nothing more than '*living saints*,' whilst *Dr. Bigg* interprets the saints as being both here and in heaven.

S. Gregory Nazianzen (A.D. 372) tells us of a certain virgin, Justina by name, who lived in the former part of the 3rd century, and who '*fled for refuge to God*,' and at the same time besought '*the Virgin Mary, to aid a virgin in peril.*' This invocation of the Virgin Mary by Justina is a necessary resultant of her '*fleeing to God for refuge.*' In his own devotions, *S. Gregory* addresses *S. Cyprian* who had been martyred a century before his time. "*Do thou look down upon us propitiously from above, and direct our speech and life, and be a shepherd or co-shepherd of this flock.*" This is only one quotation of S. Gregory addressing a Saint in glory. In another place, he speaks of prayer for *direct aid*

being made *alone to God.* With this qualification, he evidently meant when he prayed to *S. Cyprian,* not that the latter should *direct* by his own power, but that *S. Cyprian* should 'pray to God for us, that He may direct us.'

S. Gregory of Nyssa more emphatically lays down that this is the manner of the invocation. In his petition to the martyr *S. Theodore,* he says, "*Ask for peace . . . that the mad and lawless barbarian may not rage against our temples and altars.*" In other words, add your prayers to mine.

S. Chrysostom is just as careful. "*Let us flee to the 'Intercession of the Saints' and let us beseech them to pray for us.*" He mentions the Emperor in his purple, going to the tombs of S. Peter and S. Paul at Rome who "*laying aside his pride stands entreating the Saints to be his advocates with God, and he who has the diadem begs the Tentmaker and the Fisherman, even now that they are dead, to be his advocates with God.*"

S. Basil the Great is the most wonderful of all. He declares, "*I accept as intercessors the holy Apostles, Prophets, and Martyrs, and I call upon them for their intercessions to God, that by them, that is by their mediation, the good God may be propitious to me, and that I be granted redemption for mine offences.*"

It must be strictly enforced that in this, and no other way, can the Catholic truth of the 'Invocation of the Saints' be at all acceptable.

When we turn to the *Western Fathers,* we naturally desire to know what the great *S. Augustine* has to say on this subject. Thus he speaks, "*When the mind calls up where the body of the loved one is buried, and the place known by the name of the venerable martyr suggests itself, the love of him (the survivor) who remembers and prays, commends the loved soul to the same Martyr.*"

Once again, however, the invocation must be kept within its due limits. He proceeds, "*We do not build temples to our martyrs, as to gods, but as Memorials to dead men, whose spirits live with God; nor do we raise altars there, that we may sacrifice to Martyrs, but to Him alone, who is the God of the Martyrs, as well as of us.*"

S. Jerome invokes Paula and says, "*Farewell, O Paula, and do thou help with thy prayers, the old age of thy suppliant even to its end. Thy faith and thy work join thee to Christ, being in His presence, thou wilt more easily obtain that which thou dost ask.*"

In Newman's letter to Pusey, he observes that in the Latin Missal, Ritual and Breviary, "(1) *Saints are not directly addressed in these books, and* (2) *prayers end with the name of Jesus. . . . When in occasional collects, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin is introduced, it does not supersede mention of our Lord as the Intercessor.*" At another time, he speaks of the Eastern formularies of worship as being '*far less observant of dogmatic exactness.*' He cites such expressions as these, taken from the "Euchologium": "*Help, save, pity, and preserve us, O God, through her, the All-holy, Immaculate, most blessed and glorious Virgin;*" again, "*Hail Virgin, true Queen; hail, glory of our race, thou hast borne Emmanuel.*"

We do not question the words of the cardinal so far as those great service books are concerned; but he does not tell us what may be found in the Roman 'Raccolta' —a collection of prayers of indisputable authority in the Church of Rome. Here are a few examples:

"*Hail! Queen, Mother of Mercy, our Life, Sweetness, and Hope. All Hail! To thee we cry, banished sons of Eve; to thee, we sigh, groaning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn thee, O our Advocate, thy merciful eyes to us, and after this our exile, shew us Jesus, the*

blessed fruit of thy womb, O merciful, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary." Or again, "*Leave me not, my Mother, in my own hands, or I am lost. Let me but cling to thee. Save me, my Hope, save me from Hell.*" Once more, "*Guardian of virgins and holy father Joseph, to whose faithful keeping Christ Jesus, Innocence itself, and Mary, Virgin of virgins, were committed, I pray and beseech thee, by those two dear pledges, Jesus and Mary, that being preserved from all uncleanness, I may, with spotless mind, pure heart, and chaste body ever most chastely serve Jesus and Mary. Amen.*" But these are not all.

"*The Glories of Mary*" by *Liguori* are even bolder still.

"*Queen, Mother, and Spouse of the King, to her belong dominion and power, over all creatures*"; and again, "*She is Queen of Mercy, even as Jesus is King of Justice.*"

We can imagine religious fervour breaking through the bounds of theological accuracy at moments of spiritual ascendancy, but never to the extent of the disestablishment of the Eternal Father and the Incarnate Christ.

This is a form of 'Invocation' never contemplated and certainly never expressed in the testimony of the Fathers. Nor has that other form of 'Invocation,' known as '*oblique Invocation or Comprecation,*' in which we may ask God that the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary and other Saints may avail for us, received much sanction from the Church. There would appear to be nothing inherently wrong in such petitions; the fault, if any, lies in their uselessness. The Saint standing in the presence of God, must know the Will of God infinitely more than we do, and therefore his prayer being a faultless intercession, must, without any earthly

intervention, receive Divine fulfilment. We turn with relief from these excesses of the Greek and Roman Churches, and ask for the calm consideration of the reader, as to whether there is the slightest resemblance between this kind of 'Invocation' and that other which was so universally held in the undivided Church of God.

Dean Luckock in his "After Death" freely admits that the testimony of the catacombs is of some account, for he says, "*we are met with clear and unmistakable proof, that those who made the Inscriptions, considered it lawful to ask the prayers of their departed friends.*" Here are one or two examples. In the catacomb of *SS. Nereus and Achilles* are still to be seen in situ, "*Augenda, mayest thou live in the Lord, and do thou pray for us.*" "*Mayest thou live in peace, and do thou pray for us.*"

In the cemetery of *S. Callixtus*, "*Vincentia in Christ, mayest thou pray for Phœbe and her husband.*" These inscriptions shew us what the Church believed in the fourth century, and the evidence is complete.

The 'Invocation of Saints' to those who rightly and legitimately use it, is not only a factor in our spiritual development, but an exercise of supreme help to the soul. What an intense loss must obtain to be ignorant of the fact that the saints in heaven, by their incessant intercession, are offering their prayers for every child of God, whether he knows or not; and that like the incense, they rise as clouds '*before the great white throne.*'

Still further is that loss accentuated when, through invincible prejudice, the great opportunity is lost of asking those saints for their prayers and for a remembrance in their holy petitions of our weakness in a world of sin. But to believe in these great doctrines

of the ' Intercession ' and ' Invocation of the Saints,' and then to fail in recognising that it is one great and powerful means of grace in raising the soul to higher realms of sanctity, is to lose for ever the inner meaning and the inherent efficacy of the ' Communion of Saints.'

CHAPTER X

The Second Advent and the General Judgment

The Second Advent

It has been an universal belief throughout Christendom from the inception of the Christian Church even to the present day, that our Blessed Lord whould shortly return from heaven into this world, where once He lived His Incarnate life, in order to judge both the quick and the dead. This belief was strengthened by the lurid descriptions given of the event by many Biblical writers. In apostolic days, the idea was current that these things must shortly come to pass.

Notably is this the case in S. Paul's writings. This second Advent was at hand. Later on, the great apostle seems to have changed his position. He is no longer confident that this '*coming*' will take place immediately; and although he still teaches the doctrine of the second Advent, he admits that it may be long delayed. His change of position is most clearly brought out in contrasting the two following passages. "*For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.*"* And this, "*Let no man deceive you by any means:*

* 1 Thess. iv. 15.

*for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."**

It will be a fruitful study to examine how this doctrine came into existence. Undoubtedly it was an evolution from the old Hebraic idea, that a Messiah should come, who should be their champion in overcoming the power of the Gentile world, and establishing God's people in a position of universal and everlasting greatness. Prophetical writers enhanced this idea by their gift of metaphorical speech, which gradually crystallised the language of imagery into the plain materialistic statements of theology.

Let us look at one or two of these examples. The prophet *Joel* describes the calamities which should overtake the enemies of Israel, almost at once. *" The day of the Lord cometh. I will shew wonders in heaven and in earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come."*† This is an example of figurative language to describe nothing more than a victory by God's people, over a host of enemies. But under the petrifying influence of a crude theology, it has been forced upon the world as an exact description of what we may expect at the time when Christ comes forth in judgment, an event which, we are told, synchronises with the Last Day.

Once again, this same prophet in describing a plague of locusts, resorts to such exaggerated language as this, *" The earth shall quake before them ; the heavens shall tremble ; the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining."*‡

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* 2 Thess. ii. 3. † Joel ii. 30, 31. ‡ Joel ii. 10.

Or turn to the prophecy of *Isaiah*. To imagine that his descriptive writing is to be taken as a plain literal statement of what has taken place, or what will take place, is to grasp and interpret symbol for fact. Here is a description of the destruction of Idumæa. "*And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth from the vine. . . . For my sword shall be bathed in heaven; behold it shall come down upon Idumæa.*"*

In the book of *Enoch* in the 'Talmud,' there is given a bizarre account of the Messiah come to judgment. Originally it appeared as a poetic description of the destruction of the Gentiles beneath the walls of Jerusalem. Finally, it had elaborated into the mighty court of Messiah set in the valley of Jehoshaphat, to which all mankind was called to Judgment. Those who were found righteous, resorted 'for a time' in an earthly paradise, and eventually in heaven; but the wicked were to be submerged in a storm of blazing brimstone, while heaven and earth dissolved in darkness and in blood.

This was the belief in which the apostles of our Lord had been educated. They believed that in the personality of Jesus Christ was the Messiah. Yet their Lord had come already, and these things spoken of by the prophets concerning Him had not been fulfilled.

What was the natural inference? He must come again, a second time, to complete His mission. Apostolic Christianity was little more than Judaism with the additional belief that the Messiah had already come in Jesus. This is strikingly illustrated in that historical

* Isaiah xxxiv. 4, 5.

meeting of S. Peter with Cornelius.* True it is that the vision was conclusive enough to force him to obey the call of God, and admit the Gentile world into the flock of Christ ; yet a little later, when S. Peter was inclined to lapse, it brought forth the well-merited reprimand of S. Paul.†

But Jesus Christ, no less than the prophets, used similar language in his prophetic description of the fall of Jerusalem. *" And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars ; and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring ; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth : for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads ; for your redemption draweth nigh."*‡ This passage is chosen by the Church of England as the Gospel, for the second Sunday in Advent, with the evident intention of supplying an oblique reference to Christ's second coming. But such was not the purpose of our Lord, for He proceeds, *" So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand. This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away : but my words shall not pass away."*§

The express assertion of Christ that, within a generation, this statement of His should be an accomplished fact, clearly shews that the reference was to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and to nothing else.

In similar language does S. Matthew refer to the same

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* Acts x. † Gal. ii. 11-14.
‡ S. Luke xxi. 25-28. § S. Luke xxi. 31-33.

event. *" Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken . . . and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels, with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."**

It is no more than a matter of historical evidence, to prove that physically none of these things ever did take place when Jerusalem was levelled with the ground; and if not then, by what process of argument can it be thought possible that such physical catastrophies can ever take place. The fact that the Catholic Church has always believed that Christ should come again in the midst of a dissolving universe to judge the world, will not help us very much. The Church in the beginning put forth a theory of what in those days might reasonably be supposed to be the end of all things; and the Books of the Scriptures were coerced into sustaining that theory. Too little emphasis has been attached to the figurative and exaggerated writing of the East, with the result that fundamental mistakes have been made.

In other words, the highly-painted language of physical wonders and cataclysms ought to have been interpreted into the no less wonderful events of spiritual and moral experience. To refer in detail to such a passage as this, *" that we which are alive until the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel and with the trump*

* S. Matt. xxiv. 29-31.

of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them, in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." *

By no stretch of the imagination could this ever be regarded as a literal description of what, in future, will take place; nor of that other statement of S. John *"and the sea gave up the dead."*† To believe in these statements as historical expressions of things which must be hereafter, would be to cause bewilderment, after contemplating God's regulated scheme of the passage of the human soul from earth to heaven.

Let us be quite clear. We do not doubt the accuracy of the writings of these divinely inspired authors, but we separate ourselves from all popular beliefs which give to such Biblical statements, as have been quoted before, a literal and matter-of-fact explanation. We go further. Christ, we are convinced, never intended his own words on this subject to receive a literal fulfilment. And to do so, is to completely misunderstand the whole purpose of His teaching. What was His answer to the Pharisees, when they enquired of Him when the Kingdom of God should come? Did He pour forth that long list of wars and physical eruptions? No. *"The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or Lo there! for behold the Kingdom of God is within you."* ‡

Is there to be no other coming of Christ, then? Yes, certainly. Not as a physical transfiguration, but as a spiritual experience. We do not deny that at times His coming may indeed be catastrophic. A man's social edifice built upon such weak foundations

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* 1 Thess. iv. 15-17. † Rev. xx. 13.
‡ S. Luke xvii 20, 21.

as selfishness, cruelty, and greed, needs the shout of the archangel, and the trump of the God of the Scriptures, to prepare the way of the King's majesty to dwell in his heart by faith. So also was the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of Imperial Rome, the French Revolution, and the horror and devilry of the Great War with Germany. All these with one united voice, proclaim the coming of the Lord.

He is always coming, not in a materialistic sense, but in moral triumph. He comes not merely a *second* time, but endlessly. With every acceptance of His presence, every recognition of His authority, every advancement of His religion, we see those never-failing signals of the Advent of the Son of Man. Yet, one day in this earthly span stands out wonderfully as a never-to-be-forgotten coming of the Lord—the day of death.

Then shall we pass from off this earthly sphere, bereft of body, but in our true selves to be judged of the deeds done in the flesh. From that judgment, there can never be an appeal. It is drastic. It is eternally conclusive.

The General or Last Judgment

Closely allied with this delusion of the second coming of Christ is associated the equally bewildering belief in the Last Judgment. Its origin is the same. The identification of the Jewish Messiah with the Christian Jesus, the prevailing belief in Apostolic days that Christ had come to establish a temporal Kingdom, despite all that He had said to the contrary.

"*We trusted that it had been He which should have*

redeemed Israel." * And the knowledge that He was crucified, as they were pleased to think, before His Mission was accomplished, all conspired to build up a belief that within a short time He would return to fulfil His task. With the passage of years, and His non-appearance, there was caused a natural assumption that the delay was a postponement to the Last Day. Then, there would be a Judgment of portentous magnitude. The figurative language of S. John was once again given a literal meaning. "*And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away . . . And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God : and the books were opened ; and another book was opened which is the book of life ; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*" † On that great day, God should come forth from heaven, in His over-powerful Strength and Majesty, for what purpose ? To carry out a calm, judicial inquiry ? No, but to wreak fiendish vengeance on His foes.

This awful belief has been rampant within the Christian Church throughout the whole range of her history, until comparatively recent times. And even now, there are multitudes of those who call themselves Christians, who can remain calm and contented under such a vile and monstrous travesty of truth. They can gaze with equanimity at such artistic productions by *Michael Angelo* which adorn the ceiling and walls of the Sistine Chapel of the Vatican, in which God is depicted as a raging, roaring giant, His countenance bereft of any Christian attribute, smashing, tearing and bursting with His thunderbolts, one and all who impede His progress. Is it to be wondered at that men

* S. Luke xxiv. 21. † Rev. xx. 11, 12.

have rejected a Creed, a Church, which enforced such horrible beliefs as this ?

And think of the shocking inconsistency ! To be told in one breath of a Heavenly Father, full of compassion and mercy, One who desireth not the death of a sinner and wouldest not that any man should perish ; suddenly in a moment of time to be transformed into an enraged and torturing madman in the next, is to present a picture of impossible reconciliation. Moreover, it is a belief entirely opposed to the teaching of our Blessed Lord. He came, as we know, not to destroy men's lives but to save them. He could say to the adulteress, "Go and sin no more." * He sat at meat with publicans and harlots. He was indeed the Friend of sinners. When nailed on the Cross, He still prayed for His murderers. His life was the personification of immaculate love. He is the Saviour of men, He will come to be our Judge.

The truth is that a belief in the Last Judgment is a delusion as great as that of the second Advent. The only judgment we shall ever know is the Particular Judgment, and with that of a very realistic coming of Christ, which takes place in the hour of death. One last word. Apart from the poetical writing of the Bible which demands a spiritual interpretation, what would be the purpose in God holding two judgments ? None whatever. To be allotted a definite position in the world of spirits beyond the grave, as a result of the Particular Judgment, surely has a sense of finality about it.

But not so, if the soul lives in trembling fear that the Judge has a further use for him. There is no need to repudiate the words of the Apostles' Creed—"*from thence He shall come to judge both the quick and the dead.*"

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* S. John viii. 11.

The reference is to death unquestionably, rather than to a second Advent and Judgment at the Last Day.

Thus the words of Scripture are proved to be true. "*It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the Judgment.*"*

* Heb. ix. 27.

CHAPTER XI

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

THE Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead was esteemed of so wonderful a nature by His apostles, that it became the foundation stone upon which the Christian Church was built. We need to understand exactly what took place.

Jesus Christ truly died, and the dead body was placed the same day in a tomb, which was sealed by command of the governor of the city, and guarded by a group of Roman soldiers. On the third day after death, being the first day of the week, His departed soul and spirit returned to the body within the sepulchre, and caused it again to live. With the power of that spirit He rose ; that is, as a complete man, He passed through the walls of His burial place and lived once more upon the earth as He had done, with flesh and bones and every other human characteristic, for an additional space of forty days.

Wonderful though this may be, it was not the first time that such a phenomenon had taken place. *Elijah*, centuries before, through his intercession with God, and the laying of his body three times upon the dead son of the widow of Zarephath, brought life again into the lifeless boy.* It was a resurrection from the dead.

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* 1 Kings xvii. 18-23.

Elisha also by the grace of God restored life to the son of the Shunammite.* *Jesus Christ* Himself had on three different occasions during His earthly life restored life to people whom death had claimed. (a) the daughter of †Jairus; (b) the widow's son at Nain; ‡ and (c) Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, at Bethany.§

In all these miracles there will be noticed this one common fact, namely that the departed soul and spirit return into the *natural* body, and the person continues to live in this material world, as he did before, and as though nothing had happened.

Later, as we have seen, our Blessed Lord dies, and His soul and spirit return to His body, continuing His life on earth in much the same kind of way as He did before. We believe that for us, every created man, woman, and child, there will be a resurrection of the body. And on this subject there has been much confusion of thought. Our resurrection will in no kind of way be identical with the resurrections we have just mentioned. The latter have been, most emphatically a return of the spirit into the *natural, earthly* body; whilst our resurrection at the last day will be a clothing of our perfected souls and spirits, with a *spiritual* body.

A natural body is a materialistic body, fitted only for an earthly existence; whilst the spiritual body has not the least connection with the former body, and can only exist in the condition for which it is adapted, namely the spiritual state. This distinction must be recognised, for it is of the most vital importance.

We turn now exclusively to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The truth of this doctrine is established

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* 2 Kings iv. 32-37.
† S. Mark v. 22-43.
‡ S. Luke vii. 11-17.
§ S. John xi. 1-44.

by the four evangelists and by S. Paul. There are, it is true, details which differ in the story, but these surely only add to the fact that the 'resurrection' took place. If there had been an absolute identity of words in the description, we should have felt inclined to believe that the individual authors had not given to us the account as it was primarily presented to them, but had copied the story from a more primitive source.

Thus S. Luke alone describes the meeting of our Lord with two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus, on the afternoon of the Resurrection day. He says, "*their eyes were holden that they should not know Him.*"* Nor did they recognise who He was, until they sat down to supper in the village inn. Then when He blessed the bread and brake it, and gave to them "*were their eyes opened and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight.*"† It will also be remembered that when the Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene, after the Resurrection, she too was in doubt concerning His personality and failed to recognise Him. "*She supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus saith unto her 'Mary.' She turned herself and saith unto Him 'Rabboni,' which is Master.*"‡ Also that other episode, "*when the morning was now come Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.*"§

We do not get a full account of the Resurrection in any one of the Gospels; nor even, according to S. Paul, in all the Gospels put together; for he tells us, "*He was seen of Cephas. . . . After that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once . . . last of all He*

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* S. Luke xxiv. 16.
† S. Luke xxiv. 31.
‡ S. John xx. 15, 16.
§ S. John xxi. 4.

was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."* That His body was a natural body, He convinced S. Thomas on the eighth day after His Resurrection, when, though His body passed through the walls of the upper room in which the disciples were assembled, He could still affirm, "*A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.*"†

Further, it must never be forgotten that none of our Lord's disciples had the slightest idea that He would ever rise again. If they had been asked about the matter, they would probably have expressed themselves as did Martha over her dead brother Lazarus. "*I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day,*"‡ for we read that Christ, when speaking to His disciples concerning His approaching death, added, "*And the third day, He shall rise again; they understood none of these things; and this thing was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.*"§ Also on another occasion we read, "*they were afraid to ask Him.*"‖

When we pass away from the Gospels to the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, which in reality is an account of the beginnings of the Christian Church, the belief in the Resurrection of our Lord becomes paramount. A man is required to fill the vacancy of Judas in the number of the Apostolic College. What is the primary mark of his apostleship to be? "*A witness with us of His resurrection.*"** And the importance of this witness is emphasised in S. Peter's great discourse on the Day of Pentecost. "*This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses.*"†† It is the same throughout the

* 1 Cor. xv. 5-8.
† S. Luke xxiv. 39.
‡ S. John xi. 24.
§ S. Luke xviii. 33, 34.
‖ S. Mark ix. 31, 32.
** Acts i. 22.
†† Acts ii. 32.

whole of the Epistles. *"Raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father"* *; *"Raised from the dead, according to my Gospel."*†

The Sabbath was changed to Sunday entirely because of this great truth. The Eucharist, because it was a constant tradition of the Resurrection, was, from the earliest times, celebrated on the first day of the week. *"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread."*‡ One would never have expected that this great thanksgiving service, although celebrated in commemoration of Christ's death, could ever have been held on Friday, the day of His death. But it might easily have been fixed on the day of its Institution, namely Thursday, and yet as we all know, it was not. Sunday was the day of triumph over the grave; it therefore behoves all Christians to greet it with joy and to observe the Eucharist.

The apologetic value of the uninterrupted celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice upon the Lord's Day, has by no means, even now, received its full recognition. Still we think that it is quite sufficient, so far as historical evidence is concerned, in the matter of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Most of us remember the difficulties of a generation ago, when certain hypotheses were advanced to break down the historical proof of this truth. There were three principal ones. (a) That the disciples stole the body of Christ from the tomb, according to the report so well advertised by the Jews. (b) That our Lord did not really die, but that after He had been taken down from the Cross, and restoratives had been given to Him, he revived. (c) The vision-hypothesis. That the man whom the disciples and others saw after the

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* Rom. vi. 4. † 2 Tim. ii. 8. ‡ Acts xx. 7.

Resurrection, was not in reality the Christ at all. Under the spell of clairvoyancy, they *subjectively* saw Jesus Christ as an image imprinted on the brain, but not *objectively* as a living person.

The two former theories which make out the disciples to be such open hypocrites and liars, can at once be thrust on one side as impossible. The third theory is most curiously anticipated in the fact that the Christ called upon His disciple S. Thomas to handle His body and to dismiss from his mind the thought that He might be a phantom, "*for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.*"* One of the deepest investigators of this question, Keim, after discussing all the preceding hypotheses, and demonstrating their insufficiency, concludes by professing his inability to explain our Lord's Resurrection. Thus in this unsatisfactory condition does the whole subject lie at the present time, amongst those who decline to accept the Christian evidence.

We may, however, regard the truth of the Resurrection from another point of view. It is in reality potentially involved in the doctrine of the Incarnation. If Jesus Christ was only a man like ourselves, we should have to admit that His Resurrection from the dead would be almost, if not altogether, incapable of belief. But He was "*The Word which was with God, and was God, and which was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us,*"† and because of that fact, the flesh assumed by the Word of God "*did not see corruption.*"‡

This requires no great effort of belief. Jesus Christ, on one remarkable occasion, proclaimed Himself to be "*the Resurrection and the Life.*"§ This was no figurative

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* S. Luke xxiv. 39.
† S. John i. 1-14.
‡ Acts ii. 31.
§ S. John xi. 25.

speech, nor was it comparable with such expressions as *" I am the Door " or " I am the Vine,"** for He clinched the truth of the expression with a deed. He immediately raised Lazarus from the dead, a man who had been in the tomb over a space of four days. Similarly, S. Paul supports and confirms this view. *" Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."*†

The Resurrection of our Lord, then, is not an isolated fact, nor a mere self-contained miracle ; but it is an event in which mankind, as a race, is concerned, because Christ's victory over the grave is a victory over death in general, and the Resurrection of Christ is the potential resurrection of the whole family of man, whose nature He assumed. *" Our Saviour Jesus Christ hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light, through the Gospel."*‡

Now let us confine our investigation to the personality of the Risen Christ Himself.

It has been previously shewn that in His post-Resurrection appointments, He appeared to have changed His appearance, and at least, to a certain extent, had made Himself unrecognisable. Most theologians have attempted to lay a greater stress upon this incident than it would seem to warrant. In the first place, there can have been no object on the part of Christ to alter His personal appearance to such an extent as to avoid detection. When He appeared to His disciples, it was to come to them as their beloved Master, and for them to know Him as such, particularly

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* S. John xv. 5. † 1 Cor. xv. 20-22.
‡ 2 Tim. i. 10.

as He had only a limited time to declare unto them "*of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.*"* The difficulties of Mary Magdalene and of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, in their failure to recognise their Lord, can have been no more than a change of countenance, brought about by His passion and death.

No one can possibly estimate the awful agony which the Saviour of Mankind experienced during those bitter hours of woe. If great drops of blood came out upon His brow instead of sweat, we have at least some small indication that His torture was infinitely beyond what any other man has ever suffered. The description, however, gives us no means of estimating what must have been its full extent. Then we know that when the power of death seizes its victim and makes it oblivious of the joys of life, external signs follow. The bloodless face, the sunken eye, the shrinking of facial muscles, marks, which make us honestly doubt whether we are indeed gazing upon the same face which we knew so short a time before, radiant in health. The fact that the Risen Christ was so difficult of recognition may well be accounted for in this particular way, and needs very little emphasis.

We have previously shewn that our Lord's Resurrection was totally different from what our own will be. He rose again on the third day with His '*natural body*,' but we, with a *spiritual body*, and not until the Last Day. The fact that it was His *natural body* seems strange to most people, and yet what else could it be? His Resurrection meant no more than the taking up by His soul and spirit of the body which had been placed at death in the sepulchre. The body after the Resurrection was identical in material particles, with

* Acts i. 3.

the body of His earthly life. We are told, however, that it was not the same, that apart from the change of facial expression, this risen body was no longer obedient to the ordinary laws and forces of nature. He passed with this risen body through the walls of the tomb in the dawn of the first day of the week, as He did in the evening through the walls of the upper chamber, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews.

There can be no doubt that the Resurrection of Christ was in all points unique. In those three other instances of earthly resurrection described in the Gospel, the daughter of Jairus, the widow's son of Nain, and Lazarus, apart from the wonder of the miracle, in none of these cases had a physical obstacle to be overcome. Only one, Lazarus, was already in the grave ; and even in this case, the stone at the mouth of the sepulchre had previously been removed. Thus our Lord cried aloud, "*Lazarus, come forth*"* ; and the occupant walked into the light of day, clad in his burial garments.

Not so with Christ. Without breaking the sepulchre, he merely passed through the stone walls, as a perfect man ; body, soul and spirit. Hence its uniqueness. In a discussion such as this, we are bound to note these facts ; but at the same time, they need not change our primary belief that the body which rose from the grave in the case of Christ was still His *natural* body. Then we are told His body was a glorious one after death. Undoubtedly, but was it not also glorious in His earthly life ; glorious, because of its untarnished sinlessness ; glorious, because like the body of the Resurrection, no physical obstruction was capable of barring its progress ?

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* S. John xi. 41, 42.

Is there any other act in the Gospel comparable to the Resurrection, and performed by our Lord's earthly body? Decidedly, yes. Think of his extraordinary Birth. How was he born? Certainly not like any other of the sons of men. The Virgin Mary could have remained no longer a 'virgin' after the birth of Jesus, if that birth had taken place in strict obedience to the ordinary laws of nature.* He was born through the fleshly walls of the Virgin's body, an obstacle which offered no barrier to the passage of the body of Jesus, by a process of metamorphosis. This wonderful power was not newly acquired at death, but was inherent in His body at birth, and throughout His earthly life.

There are at least three different occasions when the life of the Master was in jeopardy, and yet on each occasion His deliverance was effected in a strange and miraculous manner.

(*a*) He was reading in the synagogue at Nazareth from the prophecy of Isaiah. After He had closed the Book, He handed it to the minister. But immediately afterwards He rose again and rebuked the worshippers for their insistent refusal to give Him a rightful recognition. The people rose up in anger, and rushed Him to a brow of the hill on which the city was built, intending to cast Him down and slay Him. But what happened? "*He passing through the midst of them went His way.*"†

(*b*) On another occasion, Jesus is in the midst of a long conversation with the Jews. There are many points in the discussion which He is anxious to make clear. Now they have reached that memorable incident when Abraham is put forward by the mob as a

* See Author's "Virgin Conception and Virgin Birth of our Blessed Lord."

† S. Luke iv. 30.

greater one than Christ. Unflinchingly, Our Lord tells them the truth. "*Before Abraham was, I am.*"* What happened? "*Then took up they stones to cast at Him: but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the Temple, going through the midst of them and so passed by.*"†

(*c*) On the third occasion during a disputation with the Jews, Jesus was accused of blasphemy, because He asserted with many other truths that "*I and my Father are one.*"‡ Although the anger of the crowd was fast reaching its extreme limits, He will force them to hear the truth. "Do you accuse Me of blasphemy," He would seem to say, "because I assert that I am the Son of God?" Again what happened? "*Therefore they sought again to take Him; but He escaped out of their hands.*"§

What do we understand by these remarkable escapes from His enemies? He possessed, undoubtedly, a power which was only used at His Divine discretion and will. In the Garden of Gethsemane, He could have evaded the soldiers and rabble, but on that occasion it was not in accord with the Divine Will. He had to sacrifice His life for the sins of the whole world and therefore He submitted Himself to the judgment and execution that followed.

This power, it would seem, was exactly the same that was brought to bear upon His body at the Birth, and which made it a virginal one. It was the same power that exercised the body in the tomb and which rendered it capable of passing through a physical obstruction. In other words, we are led to think that on these particular occasions He metamorphosed His body. He caused it to become so attenuated or etherialised,

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* S. John viii. 58.
† S. John viii. 59.
‡ S. John x. 30.
§ S. John x. 39.

and its density to attain such a degree of rarity, that it not only became invisible, but could, without the least inconvenience, pass through the unyielding rock as through wide-open gates.

We can now see how Christ effected a passage through the midst of His enemies, and why they could not seize Him. He became invisible. Those three occasions, which have caused a great deal of puzzlement, are shewn to be akin to the sights of wonder at His Birth and Resurrection. Even on Mount Olivet, at the moment of the Ascension, we may believe that metamorphosis again took place. His disciples no longer saw him, because of the invisibility of His body, nor could they ever hope to see Him again. At this stage, His Resurrection body was exchanged for a spiritual body—a type of body which God demands for His service, in the everlasting Kingdom of perennial Love.

CHAPTER XII

The Resurrection of the Body

THE study of the resurrection of the body or the dead, is an extremely absorbing one ; and yet the average Christian has no real knowledge as to what is meant by the expression. In our discussion of the subject of 'immortality,' we saw that amongst the primitive races and peoples of the world there was almost an universal belief in a future beyond the grave. But with regard to this future there was a common mistake, namely, that the life beyond was a mere taking up again of the duties of the earth-life, though under circumstances of enhanced happiness and joy. In other words, even in those far-removed centuries, these peoples had faint glimmerings of the light, which needed the passage of countless years and the touch of the divine revelation to bring it to the perfected truth as we have it now.

If, however, we turn to one of the greatest of the ancient civilisations—the Empire of Egypt—we find that from the most remote of ages the dead bodies of their monarchs were most carefully preserved, to be in readiness for a future resurrection. The wonderful discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamen with its many treasures, and revealing as it did to us, the body of a

Pharaoh who lived three thousand years ago, was one which held the imagination of most people.

Many other mummies equally interesting, if not attended with such wonderful and splendid adornments of the tomb, are to be seen in the museum of Cairo at the present time. And to gaze through the glass cases on the face of a Pharaoh of the time of Joseph, and of another who confronted Moses and Aaron, is, to say the least, a never-to-be forgotten experience. The Egyptians, therefore, thousands of years ago, in what may be described as the infancy of the human race, did somehow evolve and organise a religious system, of which it might be said that the very central principle was a belief in the resurrection of the dead. This is one of those great human beliefs which it is impossible to ignore.

It was additionally pointed out in that previous discussion that at these corresponding times in the world's history, God's chosen people were singularly separated from the rest of the human race in contemporary thought of this nature. "*Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*";* and yet he failed to grasp the idea that there might be some truth in the general belief of another life outside this one. No one disputes the fact that at the time of our Lord it was a current belief. The Pharisees most powerfully held it. In fact, all, save that insignificant sect known as the Sadducees. Most strikingly is it shewn at the resurrection of Lazarus, at the moment when the Master addressed Martha: "*Thy brother shall rise again.*" † Her answer was notable. With perfect readiness and simplicity she replied, "*I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last*

* Acts vii. 22. † S. John xi. 23.

day" *—an expression of the generally-accepted doctrine of the Jewish Church at that time.

With this preliminary notice, we now turn to the Christian interpretation of this great truth. It is one of the articles of the Christian faith, and holds a firm position in the formularies of the Catholic Church. The Article is expressed differently in the several Offices:

"I believe in the Resurrection of the body" (Apostles' Creed. *"I look for the Resurrection of the dead"* (Nicene Creed). *"All men shall rise again with their bodies"* (Quicunque Vult). *"Dost thou believe in the Resurrection of the flesh?"* (Baptismal Office).

Of all these quotations there is only one that is objectionable, and that is the last, in which the word 'flesh' is introduced. More obvious is this the case when in S. Paul's dissertation on the resurrection of the body, he exclaims, *"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."* † The use of the word 'flesh' has something about it of the taint of earth, and has a tendency also to encourage a belief in a material resurrection.

That it undoubtedly is not; though, as we have noticed before, the majority of Christians, as is evidenced by the questions they ask on personal identity, recognition and reunion beyond, shew distinctly that something materialistic is ever prevailing in their minds. Perhaps that graphic description of Ezekiel in which he draws a picture of the resurrection, essentially physical and material, in the valley of 'dead men's bones,' has also played a very great part in spoiling the vision of the resurrection of men's bodies at the last day, which is essentially a spiritual

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* S. John xi. 24. † 1 Cor. xv. 50.

resurrection.* "*There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body*," † says S. Paul. The two bodies are fundamentally different in constitution, structure and function. In that case, the resurrection body cannot have the slightest association with the material body of earth.

We must note that this earthly body of man is continually changing. It is never quite like what it was five minutes before. And from the time of infancy to that of old age, the body must have been completely renewed many times over. Yet you say at every stage, "It is still my own body." The expression is quite correct, because of the continuity of life. New matter replaces that which is dead; but only in accordance with certain laws and in furtherance of a greater development.

But the spiritual body is something entirely apart. It is destined for a use in a spiritual sphere, where one atom of physical matter would cause disorder. With this truth firmly fixed in our minds, we can follow that wonderful analogy of the resurrection as expressed by S. Paul. It is by no means an easy process to follow, as we shall see by submitting it to a close and careful consideration.

The apostle presents us with a picture of a common agricultural process—the sowing of seed. You sow ordinary grain in the ground. There it remains. Within it is a vital element, which in course of time, rises above the surface of the earth, and in doing so takes to itself—or, more accurately, God gives it—an entirely new body, adapted to its new conditions and environment. So, says the apostle, is the body of man sown.

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* Ezekiel xxxvii. † 1 Cor. xv. 44.

Now arises the difficulty. What is meant by this 'sowing of man'? The majority of people immediately exclaim, 'At his death.' Nothing of the kind. It is this answer which causes the whole of the argument to become an absurdity. On the contrary, a man is sown when he is born into the world, just as a grain of wheat is sown when it is placed in the ground. And further notice, "*that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be.*" * In other words, 'the body that is sown, unlike that of Christ, *shall never rise.*' The body of the seed is adapted to the soil: the body of the blade of corn to the air and light. Thus is it with man. His physical body is adapted to a material existence, while his spiritual body is adapted to a spiritual existence and no other. Therefore the two bodies, the sown and the risen, are adjusted to distinct spheres and phases of life; and because of that fact, must differ fundamentally.

But this is not all. S. Paul compares the death of the seed with the death of the body. The seed decomposes, disintegrates, and is absorbed into the soil. This is what happens precisely when a dead body is buried. In both cases all that is left, after a time, is a bare husk. Within the seed, however, is a living element, and within man's body is a soul and spirit. In the case of the seed, the germ sprouts; in the case of the body, the soul and spirit pass into a spiritual existence—Purgatory.

"*That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.*"†

Thus it is through death that man enters into a fuller and spiritual life.

There is, however, still more to learn. The resurrection of the seed is not the resurrection of the dead

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* 1 Cor. xv. 37. † 1 Cor. xv. 26.

husk, but the bursting forth of its inner life into a more advanced state of being. Similarly, in the resurrection of the body, we get the resurrection of nothing which has once been physical or material, but an ascent of something which is personal and spiritual.

Just, and only up to this point, will the analogy help us. The seed's new body, it is true, is different, but it still remains material; the resurrection body of a man is different, for it is immaterial or spiritual.

Death is essential to development in both cases. Through death do we find the gate to an ampler and a fuller life.

The resurrection body of man is a spiritual body—the very antithesis of anything either natural or material. As to what the spiritual body will be like, we have no conception. The apostle does not describe it, for the simple reason that it was beyond his powers to do so. We cannot paint with brilliant hues the bodies of the ransomed, which are capable of experiencing unspeakable joy, because the pigments which are to hand are so dull and lifeless. So "*eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.*" *

Of this resurrection body two things are unquestionably definite.

(*a*) That being a body it must have *form*, and (*b*) that it is *spiritual*, not a spirit.

At the risk of being wearisome, one must emphasise the latter. The Catechism of the Scotch Church states, "*The self-same bodies of the dead, which were laid in the grave, shall be raised up at the last Day by the power of Christ, and united to the souls for ever.*"

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* 1 Cor. 11. 9.

After what has already been said, the absurdity of such a statement is obvious. *Origen* truly observed *"that the doctrine of a physical resurrection was the foolishness of beggarly minds."*

Some people have thought that our future bodies may be similar to those we possess at the present time ; others, that our physical organisms may become etherealised. If only such people would grasp this important fact, that the very atmosphere is as truly material as the solid rock, and that the smallest germ of the material could not be used in the building of the spiritual, they would cease to speak of that which is unscriptural, ridiculous and impossible.

But think of the consequences, if it were at all possible to introduce the material into the spiritual. It would force upon God's celestial servants the limitations of earth once more. Once again would they know the sins, the sorrows and the weaknesses of earth from which they thought they had eternally been removed. It would be one gigantic blow to the whole purpose and economy of God.

This resurrection body of man, though intangible and spiritual, must have form. There is nothing very difficult in imagining this. On what basis of argument may it be assumed that 'form' is a characteristic of matter alone ? Life without form is inconceivable. One might just as well doubt the possibility of personal identity. Certainly, individuality would cease. The bodies of the redeemed would be absorbed into the Infinite, as into Buddha ; and positive, individualistic life would cease.

The language of S. Paul helps us in this thought. *" God giveth it a body, as it hath pleased Him."* * You

* 1 Cor. xv. 38.

will notice the tense of the verb. It is *past*, not present. God had long ago formed the type, the appearance, the characteristics of the individual body, something which was to be unchangeable.

Still, why should such a thought ever have been conceived? For God to neglect us is unthinkable. No. "*If God so clothe the grass of the field . . . shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*" * The expressive word 'clothe' which we have just used, seems to be the most rightful word in explaining the method of the resurrection. "*For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon, with our house which is from heaven.*" In fact, the whole passage will well repay reading.† The resurrection of man will be a clothing of his soul and spirit by that spiritual body, which will once more restore to him his tripartite nature—body, soul and spirit.

And this restoration will take place at the Last Day. A previous resurrection is precluded by the history of the soul of man in Purgatory, and also by the further knowledge that there are "*spirits of just men made perfect.*" ‡ in heaven already, waiting for the perfection of their manhood, when they too shall be clothed upon with a spiritual body—the body of their resurrection.

For further references of the resurrection of the body at the Last Day, we have the following: "*And this is the Father's Will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the Will of Him that sent Me, that everyone that seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*" § "*No man*

* S. Matt. vi. 30.
† 2 Cor. v. 1-4.
‡ Heb. xii. 23.
§ S. John vi. 39, 40.

can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day."*

And from all that we have read and imagined, the Last Day seems to be the most fitting moment for the clothing to take place. It is then that the most preponderating mass of created humanity will pass to its final reward. Only with a spiritual body may men realise on the one hand the full beatitude of heaven, or, on the other, the awful meaning of the condemnation of hell.

It may be observed that no reference has, as yet, been made in these discussions to the Patristic writings. The reason is that they are of very little value. Their chief asset is contained in the study of exegesis, but for the elucidation of questions of a problematical nature they are hopelessly disqualified, as will be seen from the following examples.

S. Thomas Aquinas states that "*our heavenly bodies shall possess that state, as it regards age, in which our Lord rose from the dead and went up to Heaven in His glorified Body. For our Lord Himself must ever be the perfect ideal, both of the absolute and unchanging youth, and of the absolute maturity of eternity.*" "*Till we all come in the unity of the Faith and the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*" †

Bishop Pearson, in his 'Creed,' can hardly have had more materialistic thoughts than are here quoted: "*I am fully persuaded of this as a most necessary and infallible truth, that as it is appointed to all men once to die, so it is also determined that all men shall rise from death, that the souls separated from our bodies are in the hands of God and live, that the bodies dissolved into dust*

* S. John vi. 44. † Eph. iv. 13.

or scattered into ashes, shall be re-collected in themselves and re-united to their souls, that the same flesh which lived before shall be revived, that this resurrection shall be universal, no man excepted, no flesh left in the grave, that all the just shall be raised to a resurrection of life, and all the unjust to a resurrection of damnation; that this shall be performed at the Last Day, when the trumpet shall sound: and thus I believe in the Resurrection of the body."

We only quote the above two passages to shew how far removed the writers were from conceiving what was meant by a 'spiritual body.'

Tertullian is certainly no better for he regarded the 'teeth' as the seeds of the resurrection body. To serve that purpose they were providentially made eternal. Apart from this idea countenancing a physical resurrection, it hands out very little hope of salvation to this degenerate and decaying world. To imagine that immortality depended upon the eternity of a man's teeth is to express a belief too absurd for words.

Nor is the great *S. Augustine* any clearer when he declares that in the resurrection "*our bodies would be restored to us perfect both in quality and quantity. Even the hairs which we shaved and the nails which we cut would be restored to us.*" What, indeed, should we look like, if this were at all possible! Little hope there would be of any recognition in the Great Beyond. No, we must not hope for knowledge in this direction. Let us, however, turn to another aspect of the question.

In dealing with the condition of the soul in Purgatory, we mentioned such subjects as recognition and reunion of departed souls. At the same time, we were careful to mention that the great possibility was that such incidents would only take place within certain

limitations. Possibly only between kindred souls within the same sphere of holiness. Now, however, in the doctrine of the 'resurrection of the body,' there is a wider sphere for study. There are from time to time questions asked which are not altogether unnatural, and from the persistency in which they are put forward, demand an answer.

Two people in this world are held together by the unbreakable chains of love. The thought of death coming to separate them is one which is never entertained. Its consequences are altogether too disastrous. They both pray that that day of separation may be for ever removed.

Yet, in the height of this pure and heavenly love for each other, death steps in and breaks all human companionship. What is the result? Is the earthly partner content to be told that he will meet her again and know her in her resurrection body? In the majority of cases he is not. He craves for personal identity. In his grief he hates the thought of anything being changed. His desire is to see her again, just as she was. It is no consolation to him to be told that she will be more glorious. He does not want that. 'As she used to be,' that is the full measure of his soul's lament. Nothing else will bring satisfaction.

But pause for a moment and think. This poor man's mind is hopelessly confused. 'He wants no change,' he cries; and yet his heart's desire is continually changing. Matter has no stability nor any true identity.

In reality, what that man's love is concentrated upon, though he knows it not, are not the natural elements of her body, but her true hidden self, her 'ego,' her soul within.

Her face, her charm, her comeliness are not of the flesh, but are merely manifested or demonstrated by it. He knows it, though it is hard to make him admit it at this crisis of his life. Surely this is proved when she lies dead upon the couch. He gazes upon the form in mute silence. All rapturous joy has fled. He is overawed. This dead figure, after all, is not what he wants. Though he failed to recognise physical disintegration in life, it is plainly seen in death. What, in truth, he has done is to mistake a physical organism for personal identity.

In his frenzy, he mistook the material for the permanent, and must be taught that the spiritual is for everlasting. "*For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*" *

How full of illusion life is! You look on some well-known scene and you imagine you can identify every element. Nothing remains identically as it was when you were here before. The grass, the leaves, the trees, the running brook, all have changed, everything has been renewed; and still we say, 'It is exactly the same as when I visited the place before.' This could never be the case; we could never personally identify anything at all, if *all* were change and decay. But because of the things which are 'permanent and abiding,' we shall personally identify the spiritual body of the loved one hereafter; only, we affirm again, because of its unchangeableness.

Then there is eternal reunion. The greatest bereavement of man is, and always will be, death. No normal and intelligent being can refuse to take an interest in the question, 'Is the grave the end of all things?'

To those who answer it in the affirmative, death is

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* 2 Cor. iv. 18.

an appalling disaster. There are no doubt a few who entertain such views, but they are most probably insane, for its acceptance is to make of life a meaningless and stupendous fraud. What was the purpose of life? Why incite our ambitions to achieve some great and noble task, if death, like some fiend, tears us away from it, half-finished? No, reunion must be an impregnable truth. We are inspired in its belief; its disbelief is a paralysis. The thought of reunion upholds and sustains a human being through the most miserable of lives. Its rejection is to dethrone reason from its pinnacle of supremacy.

To the humble disciple of the Cross, the knowledge that there never could be reunion is to make heaven synonymous with hell. There must be few in the world to-day who could not say with *Newman*, "*they have loved long since and lost awhile*," and whose crowning desire is to take up once more those loves and friendships with renewed ardour. Nay, the mere memory of them in quiet moments alone makes life worth living.

Is this crowning anticipation, to which men have clung through centuries of time, to be, after all a childish fable? Is grief, the purifier of the soul, a trick of nature? No, ten thousand times no. It is an inborn passion of the human heart; it is the very food on which the soul must feed; it is the clearest evidence that love is in the world and that love outlives everything, and that love is God.

Reunion needs no proof. It rests upon the truth that there is a God—tender, faithful and compassionate. Before we altogether leave this subject, there is the question of recognition, which, because of its universal interest, calls for some kind of explanation. There are many people who hold the idea that the

spiritual body will be a facsimile of the natural, and that the identifying features of the earthly man can never be lost even in a spiritual world. Such people are not always guilty of a belief in a physical resurrection, but imagine that the likeness of the temporal and eternal must be identical.

Such an imagination receives no enlightenment from S. Paul. On the contrary, he opposes such a view. This is what he says: "*As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*" * This must mean something of the nature of a radical change; far more, indeed, than any glorification. Thus such a belief in recognition does not go far enough.

Very often in this world we fail to recognise people by their features when a certain number of years is allowed to elapse between our visitations. Similarly, with the friends of childhood, whom we have never once met through decades of years. What possible hope of recognising them would there be left to us, if facial expression is the only means remaining to us? Or take the case of a dying mother, who must needs leave behind her darling child, a child destined for old age. If recognition is to take place only along such lines as these, how could it take place at all?

Therefore, without fear of contradiction, we may be assured that recognition beyond is not dependent upon anything in this material world. "*There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*" † This definite statement of the apostle shews an infinite distance between the two. Thus it is no longer any use arguing by comparisons. Can we adopt no

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* 1 Cor. xv. 49. † 1 Cor. xv. 44.

other means? Apart from the body, there is the soul and spirit. They are in reality the *true man*, and have had an earthly life.

Have we never recognised the true being of a man in our intercourse with him? Times beyond number. We know our friend most chiefly in his character, his love, the expressions of his countenance, simply because they are the real reflections of his soul. Here below, we recognise our friend in ways we do not pause to explain. Here are subtle means at our disposal—mental vision, insight, intuition and sympathy. They may not be cultivated enough here, always to be unerring, but in the great Hereafter they will be all-sufficient. These characteristics of the soul endure throughout eternity. They can never fail. We shall be drawn towards the object of our thought, possibly with a directness and precision only less than spiritual affinity.

There is no need now to ask if the child at death will remain the child in light, or the maimed, the bruised, the blind will retain those marks in God's heaven. The answer is, No. There is nothing of the material in that exalted sphere; but man will possess a new, a spiritual body, a body which clothes and bedecks his purified soul. Men and women will stand forth in all the radiance of their beauty and their glory, fit partners with the saints in light.

We shall know them by those unerring tests to which we have given expression, and should even these be not enough, must God's scheme for final recognition fail through lack of ingenuity? Dare we even think that human suggestion is the limit to every way and means? What of that infinity of mind and thought which rests in God! Can any problem be too great for His solution? Can any task be too deep which

His Almighty Mind shall fail to scale? Recognition is a joy of God, and He in His appointed way will make it possible.

> "Son of my Soul, I shall meet thee again
> And with God be the rest."
>
> —BROWNING.

CHAPTER XIII

The Holy Angels

THE holy angels of God are spirits. They never have had an earthly life, they never have known salvation because of their sinlessness, and therefore they belong to a different constitution from mankind. They will never be known as perfected men, nor will human beings in this world ever be evolved into angels. The two belong to different orders: "*Who maketh His angels spirits.*" *

They are an order or orders of heavenly things, created by God for an altogether different purpose from that of man. Their chief function, amongst many, is to wait upon God, and to be ever watchful for His bidding. With the creation of man their duties were extended, and they were directed to pass from heaven to earth in order that man himself might be abundantly helped by spiritual power and that God's Will might be faithfully completed. Their fulfilment of God's Will is strikingly brought out in our Lord's own prayer, "*Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.*" The angels perform it perfectly in heaven; so should we aim for that perfection here. To fallen men they are God's messengers, and act as our guardians.

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* Heb. i. 7.

But this is by no means all we know about these celestial spirits. There are different choirs of angels which surround the throne of God, each set to fulfil a part of God's mission to man, the whole producing a symmetrical multitude which is calculated to restore mankind once more from the darkness of sin into the purity of light.

Obviously, as we should expect in a wise government, to bring this wonderful and mysterious work about, the different choirs of angels in their allotted spheres pursue their task with ceaseless energy, working with joy and thanksgiving for God's everlasting consummation. On the page of Holy Writ there has been revealed to mortal man the vision of nine separate and distinct orders of celestial spirits, these again being reduced into combinations of three, because of a common attribute.

The first three orders, or hierarchy, is composed of the spirits of the '*contemplative*' orders, consisting of the *seraphim, cherubim* and *thrones*. The next three orders are grouped together under a hierarchy of the '*regulative*' orders, consisting of the *dominions*, the *virtues* and the *powers*. The last three orders are known as the hierarchy of the '*administrative*' orders, which comprise the *principalities*, the *archangels* and the *angels*.

The whole nine orders, in three distinct hierarchies, make a perfect whole. In fact, these three hierarchies shew us most clearly that with their triads of ranks they represent even now a combination of what the Catholic Church will ultimately be like, when in the New Jerusalem above "*the length and the breadth, and the height of it are equal.*" *

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* Rev. xxi. 6.

This great 'society of angels' is one great family, one glorious chorus, one mighty army under one Supreme Head, each individual member ready to obey the Divine and Inflexible Will.

There is one great act of worship which quickens the spiritual life of each personal angel throughout that holy throng; and yet there are not two ranks throughout that manifold array, which have the same gifts or possess the same vocation. No two, out of those nine mysterious ranks, reveal in the same way the inexhaustible wisdom of God.

Let us now consider separately the three great hierarchies, the Contemplative, the Regulative and the Administrative, for we shall find that they are linked together by imperishable cords of connection. A perfect administration can never be achieved unless it has been preceded by well-defined ruling or regulating principles. These constitute laws, without which no administration is possible. And in like manner, regulations must inevitably be the outcome of the highest and holiest contemplation. Why? Because contemplation engenders truth.

Contemplation is the highest gift of all, and administration the lowest. And yet in the Catholic Church at the present time the order is reversed. People seem to forget that it was only through the first order that truth came into the world; it was an interpretation through contemplation of the Mind of God. So also, through the second order, by the regulation of the truth, by its simplification to meet the intellect of man, was it made possible for humanity through an administration to grasp truths which were intricate and hidden. The loss to the Church would have been infinite if many of her priests had not sought the 'religious' life, spent their years in

contemplation, in emulation of the first triad of the angels, and passed on their life's work to be used afterwards by the regulative and administrative powers of the Church.

We now turn to the characteristics of each order of the three hierarchies.

And first, the hierarchy of contemplation, divided into three orders, each order working separately and demonstrating the three great elements of the contemplative life itself.

Highest of all come the *seraphim*. We only read of them in the prophecy of Isaiah: "*Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet and with twain he did fly. . . .*" * The function of the seraphim is to proclaim throughout heaven the awful Holiness of God. "*Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory,*" is what they antiphonally sing.

But we read that one of the seraphim flew with a burning coal from off the heavenly altar, and placed it on the lips of the prophet, who had only just proclaimed himself to be a "*man of unclean lips.*" By these two acts—the song of God's holiness and the burning out of uncleanness, for fire is a universal purifier—the seraph guards God's holiness. He comes forth, therefore, and stands for the highest conceivable distinction in God's universe, namely Sanctity.

Following upon the seraphim come the cherubim. They are spoken of by the prophet Ezekiel: "*I knew that they were the cherubim. Everyone had four faces apiece, and everyone had four wings; and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings.*" †

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* Isaiah vi. 2-7. † Ezek. x. 20, 21.

They have always been known as the special guardians of the ' knowledge ' of Jehovah.

Philo of Alexandria so describes them, and so do the early Christian Fathers. The Rabbis always considered them as youthful angels, and this no doubt is the reason why they bear children's faces in art. Or it may be that their youthful appearance, representing childlike simplicity and purity of heart, are the main qualifications for the acceptance of truth—the knowledge of God.

It will be remembered in the allegorical story of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, that when God thrust them out, He placed cherubim and a flaming sword at the east of the garden, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.* That is their function. They must keep off from the tree of life all who have unholily eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. They must teach the knowledge of God, and because of that they are joined to holiness—the rank of angels above them, the seraphim.

The cherubim were represented in Solomon's temple in the Holy of Holies. It was from that place that God's word was heard and known ; and because they are the angels of knowledge, they are found there with their outstretched wings shading the Mercy Seat. Further, on the veil of the Temple, beyond which no ordinary worshipper could pass, were found the embroidered cherubim to guard the Holy of Holies from profanity.

Then comes the last order of the contemplative angels—the *thrones*. These are they whom S. Paul mentions in his Epistle to the Colossians : " *For by*

* Gen. iii. 24.

Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in the earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him." * They are situated at the end of the contemplative choir and at the beginning of the regulative group. The *thrones* are engaged with the cherubim and seraphim in holy contemplation; yet as a distinctive duty, they undertake not only the preservation of all knowledge derived from its holiness, but they shape that knowledge into the form of a throne or directing basis, from which all may profit by it.

This is not the function of a lower order. The thrones take it to themselves and manipulate the knowledge of God into such forms and shapes as may be handled by those lower hierarchies of angels for the benefit of God's people. And this knowledge must be strictly of the truth, because of the thrones which belong to the contemplative choir. Their highest rank is the seraphim, whose dazzling mark is sanctity —an attribute of God Himself. Holiness permeates the entire hierarchy, and is in touch with the All-Highest. And inasmuch as the Lord of Heaven cannot contradict Himself, that everlasting truth which proceedeth from that glorious band of contemplation is absolute.

Let us now turn to the second order of the group of angels—the second hierarchy of celestial spirits, the 'regulative choir.' In this choir there are, as in the previous one, three orders—*dominions*, *virtues* and *powers*.

First of all, the *dominions*. They are spoken of by S. Paul in the above-mentioned Epistle to the Colos-

* Col. i. 16.

sians, and also in his Epistle to the Ephesians: "*Far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.*" * They are also referred to by S. Jude, as being despised by traitorous Christians: "*Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominions and speak evil of dignities.*" †

The dominions being the highest in the regulative choir and nearest to the thrones, receive from the latter the fruits of holy contemplation arranged by them on a base, from which the task is taken up in the form of regulation by the dominions.

The next order is called the *Virtues*. There are several different translations of this word, such as 'power' and 'might'; but these names are given to the third order of this hierarchy, and it will therefore be as well to retain for them, the title *virtues*. It is the same word as was used when the woman touched the hem of Christ's garment and He perceived that 'virtue' had gone out of Him. The virtues in their regulative work stand for strength. They support the dominions in asserting that such a position of dignity and authority can only be upheld by the power of strength.

The dominions need the virtues, for the derivation of the latter word is 'vir'—man or strength. Thus among the angels, spiritual strength, not weakness, flows from positions of responsibility. And yet this strength is not an overpowering might. It is very gentle and tender, as is shewn in the third order of this group, namely the *powers*

We are told that it is the corresponding term to our word 'influence,' which means our in-flowing towards

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* Eph. i. 21. † S. Jude, 8.

others, regulating them by the instilling of our thoughts (as they are given us from above) into their minds, our purposes into their wills, our desires into their hearts. "*The only coercive force of the Church is 'persuasion,'*" says *Lacordaire.*

It follows that this beautiful order of angels would never use force to break the will of man. God never does it, nor do the *powers.* Most wonderfully was this attribute of these particular angels demonstrated on the Cross of the Son of Man. The power He used was an influence. And rather than injure the free-will of man, He died to win it.

Thus *dominions, virtues and powers* possess all that is necessary to regulate all things and all men.

We now turn to the last of the hierarchies, the choir of the *administration.*

Once again there are three orders. The first is the *principalities* or *princedoms.* Their names have been found amongst the lists of celestial spirits already quoted. They are always named *principalities* with one exception, and that is '*rule*' in I Cor. xv. 24, and also in the revised version of Eph. i. 21.

What is their function? Initiation. Think, when all the contemplative hosts have finished their task upon some truth of God, and then the regulative hosts have shaped it into action, what else is to be achieved? It must be spread throughout the world. This action needs the first steps of initiation, and this is wrought by the principalities. They are, indeed, the prime movers in every good work.

Initiation, however, cannot exist alone; it involves the sacred duty of delegation. This is taken up by the second order of the hierarchy for which they have been endowed with their own special graces and gifts. These are the *archangels.* On the pages of the Old

and New Testament Canons there is only *one* mentioned by name : *" Michael, the archangel."* * In the books of the Apocrypha we are told that there are seven in number : *" I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One."* † *S. Gabriel* is an angel mentioned by name, and because of that fact may be an archangel, as also *S. Uriel,* whose name is particularly specified : *" And the angel that was sent unto me, whose name was Uriel, gave me an answer."* ‡

Seven in number are the archangels, but only four are named. *S. Michael* appears as the great administrator of all these spiritual forces which must ever conflict between the soul of man and the powers of the world, the flesh and the devil. His name proclaims his mission. Michael—' who is like God.' His administration is the carrying on of a spiritual warfare for humanity, and he performs his task in the recognition of the sovereignty of God in everything.

S. Gabriel, whose name implies ' the strength of God,' sees to the army supplies in this never-ceasing warfare. If S. Michael exemplifies that spirit of righteous intolerance of evil, S. Gabriel would teach that out of weakness we are made strong. Thus S. Gabriel is the messenger of the Incarnation. He announces to Zacharias the coming of John, and to S. Mary that she should be the mother of God.

S. Raphael, whose name signifies ' the healing of God,' obtains it doubtless because of his being sent to Tobit to cure him of an affection of the eyes : *" And Raphael was sent to heal them both, that is to scale away the whiteness of Tobit's eyes, and to give Sara, the daughter of Raguel, for a wife to Tobias, the son of*

* S. Jude, 9. † Tobit. xii. 15. ‡ 2 Esdras iv. 1.

Tobit." * He is believed to have been the angel who stirred the waters of Bethesda, upon whose stepping into the troubled waters himself was cured from that very hour. If we think of him as associated with the heavenly warfare, he would be attached and hold primatial sway over the medical and hospital departments. He would see to the binding up and healing of wounds caused by the ravages of sin.

S. Uriel has a name which indicates 'the light of God.' When little is known about the works of a being, it is always safe to gauge his character from the name he bore in those far-off days. He conversed with Esdras, illuminated his difficulties, and acted as the principal intelligence officer in the spiritual conflict.

By this means he would keep each section of the heavenly hosts accurately informed as to the condition of the battle through their principal leaders, Michael, Gabriel and Raphael.

Last of all, we reach the final order, the third of the administratives—even the *angels* themselves.

The name *angel,* or messenger, ought strictly to be confined to the multitudes of the ninth order, but we have developed a careless manner and speak of each of the triads of the three hierarchies under the one all-embracing term. At this time, however, we mean by the 'angels,' the rank and file of the armies of God. These angels are under the authority of the archangels. Their mission is to help, succour, guide and guard humanity everywhere and at all times. Thus we find them mentioned over the whole space of Holy Writ. But chiefly do they come to us as ministering spirits *"sent forth to minister to them, who shall be heirs of salvation."* †

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* Tobit iii. 17. † Heb. i. 14.

You can trace them down the history of God's chosen people, appearing at momentous times to the leaders of this race. At the birth of the Divine Child they herald his Nativity. In the wilderness of Temptation and in the Garden of Gethsemane, they are present to strengthen the Son of Man in His human weakness. They are about our path and about our bed. They rejoice in heaven over each sinner that repenteth and carry the souls at death to the Purgatory beyond.

In fine, their fundamental duty is to reclaim the world which is lost in sin, and to bring it, with joyful praise, back once more to the courts of God: "*But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly City, and to an innumerable company of angels.*" *

One great loving duty, however, which is common throughout each angelic sphere, is the glorious and never-ending worship which is offered to the majesty of the Triune God. Joined and interlinked with the reverential worshippers of the Expectant and Militant Church of earth, it reaches its highest and noblest representation in the magnificent offering of the High Mass, " where with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify God's Glorious Name evermore praising Thee and saying—Holy, Holy, Holy."

* Heb. xii. 22.

CHAPTER XIV

The Fall of the Angels

It will be admitted that the subject upon which we are about to enter rightly finds its place in a volume of this description. That this 'fall' is difficult of comprehension and overshadowed in mystery goes without saying; but that it is one which appeals to the intellect is clearly shewn, when we glance at the numerous attempts which have been made to evolve theories out of well-known passages of Holy Scripture.

All people, we presume, will agree that the angels were created before man, and most people are loud in their declaration that certain of these celestial spirits have fallen from their high estate and base their belief on well-known passages in the Bible. We should esteem it a very strange phenomenon if there were no mention of this spiritual catastrophe in the New Testament. And we are told that in the Epistle of S. Jude, and Second Epistle of S. Peter, we have the fact of the angelic fall proclaimed in words which brook no contradiction.

Here are the quotations: "*And angels which kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, He hath kept under everlasting bonds under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.*" * "*For if God*

* Jude, 6.

spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell (Tartarus) and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." * In fact, if we read concurrently these two chapters, we must be wonderfully struck at their great similarity; so much so, that the relationship of the two Epistles is only solved by supposing that S. Peter and S. Jude both made use of a deposit of prophetical teaching which had its origin with the apostles, and which consisted mainly of an application of several leading Old Testament incidents to New Testament times.

The story of the 'fall of the angels' in this case, loses much of its historic value. We can hardly believe that it came to these two apostles by direct revelation, because it has little if any spiritual value. It finds no place in the Christian Creeds, and is, at best, but a pious opinion.

Where, then, may we look for this prophetical teaching? There are several writers who refer, but only obscurely, to the 'fall.' Notably Isaiah and Ezekiel: *"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne over the stars of God. I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."* † *"Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering . . . the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee, in the day when thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have*

* 2 Pet. ii. 4. † Isaiah xiv. 12-15.

set thee so : thou wast upon the holy mountain of God : thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. . . . Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness : I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings that they may behold thee." *

To whom are these two prophets referring? An examination will shew that Isaiah is making reference to the iniquity of the King of Babylon, and Ezekiel to that of the King of Tyre. It is one more instance of the use of figurative language, in which the rolling sentences are garbed in poetry and lose their claim for the pronouncement of clear and indisputable history.

A little stress has been laid upon the fact that Isaiah addresses a person named Lucifer (' bringing light '), son of the morning, but the whole passage is nothing less than a reference to the earthly king of Babylon, arrayed in his pristine glory, and the awful contrast which his declension brings. It can hardly be construed into a definite reference that Lucifer was the heavenly name of Satan. Lucifer can always be attributable to any being of light, and must therefore be used in that sense. Moreover, the name ' Lucifer ' is only found on this occasion in the whole of the Bible. Indeed, without any belief in angels at all, the denunciation of the Babylonian king at the lips of Isaiah, would have been equally as effective.

Before once again we return to the New Testament, there is the Book of Job, which speaks in several places of Satan, the adversary. Can we find any

* Ezek. xxviii. 13-17.

new light thrown upon this discussion in the reading of this wonderful poem? *Victor Hugo* considered it as "*perhaps the greatest masterpiece of the human mind.*" Is the book history or parable? That a man named 'Job' really lived is generally accepted in these days. That he was noted for his wealth, wisdom and faith is equally true. The Book of Job, however, is a poem based upon the traditional man. Every action in the poem is therefore non-historical, and the characters probably imaginary. The purport of the book is to emphasise for ever the all-embracing providence of God, even in the face of every affliction which the mind of man or devil could possibly conceive. This is all we need say concerning the book itself. Now let us turn to one or two references.

"*Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord and said, From going to and fro in the earth and from walking up and down in it.*" *

The expression, 'sons of God,' is often interpreted as the celestial beings who execute the will of God, but Satan here is merely an adversary (see marginal note), and is not to be identified with a proper nature as the prince of the kingdom of darkness. The reading of the entire passage does not represent him as being opposed to God. He is not in hell, but wanders up and down the earth, testing the lives of men and the motives of their acts.†

He hardly appears to be opposed to God, but a servant of His who visits the earth continually to prevent God's beneficence from being abused. We

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* Job i. 6, 7. † Job ii. 3.

should hardly claim the evidence of this reference to establish the belief in the 'fall of the angels.'

"*When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy.*" * This is often brought as evidence for the belief in angels. And yet it is pure metaphor. The Platonists, it is true, did believe that the stars were living creatures; but we need think no more than that the writer, inspired by his poetic genius, meant, as Shakespeare did, when he said, "*Each in his motion like an angel sings*" (*Merchant of Venice*, v. 1). The book of Job clearly refers to the angels as being in existence, but to nothing that would prejudice us to believe that certain of them had fallen from their high estate.

There is a curious saying of our blessed Lord which calls for comment: "*I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.*" † Christ was addressing the seventy after they had returned to Him with joy after the success of their missions. "*Even the devils,*" they declared, "*are subject unto us through thy Name.*" ‡

This declaration of our Lord is capable of more than one interpretation. There are those who affirm that after listening to these tales of exultation, Christ spoke after this manner: "Be not lifted up with pride at your success over the spirits of darkness. Remember that it was pride which hurled from his exalted place in heaven the chief of these spirits. I beheld this 'fall' as God in heaven long before the Creation." Another comment, more favourably received than the former, is paraphrased as follows: "You naturally exult in these triumphs of My power through your hands. I was contemplating a far

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* Job. xxxviii. 7. † S. Luke x. 18.
‡ S. Luke x. 17.

greater conquest, namely, Satan's power shattered, his strongholds spoiled. The idolatries and false philosophies of the world vanquished by My cross and resurrection."

S. John, too, in his Gospel has a remark about Satan: "*He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*" * The emphasis to be laid here is on the words "from the beginning"—prior to Creation. "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*" † In other words, 'in the beginning' means 'from everlasting,' and marks the age of Satan. He is a spirit who existed before the so-called 'fall of the angels' could possibly have happened. He was 'in the beginning.'

There are, further, one or two passages in the Apocalypse which must not be overlooked: "*And I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.*" ‡ We must always remember in this heavenly vision, that the descriptive language used in explaining the dream was the best the apostle had at his command. Anthropomorphism was never more lucidly exemplified than in this account of S. John's revelation. We are not so much concerned with the meaning of the entire verse, as on that of the star which fell from heaven. The star, we have been led to believe before, is an angel, not necessarily an evil one; and yet it is difficult to believe that an angel of light could open a bottomless pit, whatever may be its peculiar significance, the smoke from which wrought destruction upon the earth. Probably it is a parallel description to the one of

* S. John viii. 44. † Gen. i. 1. ‡ Rev. ix. 1.

Christ already considered: "*I saw Satan like lightning fall from heaven.*" *

Perhaps one of the most pictorial accounts of the 'fall of the angels' is supplied in a later chapter: "*And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*" †

A mere cursory glance over this quotation establishes at once the fact that there can be no possible allusion to the 'fall.' The angels who were cast out here were angels of the dragon, of Satan; angels who had never known a 'high' estate. This war must therefore refer to a conflict much more modern than the Creation. Satan and his army were firmly established.

It was at the time of the crucifixion and resurrection of our blessed Lord that this particular war took place. The result of the former was the eternal breaking of the fetters of sin, and the latter the restoration of life, where death had previously prevailed. The war reached the zenith of its fierceness round the cross whereon the Prince of Life was laid, and who as God, carried heaven with Him. Since that awful warfare and subsequent triumph, a change had come over the whole problem of sin. True it is that Satan and his legions of angels play an active part, through temptation, in the great field of salvation; yet the Christian hope is brighter, the vision is clearer, heaven is no longer a shadowy dream, but an enduring city which passeth not away.

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* S. Luke x. 18. † Rev. xii. 7-9.

Our Lord Himself proclaims that in His own day it was being achieved. Not by some act before the universe was called into volition, but even now was Michael, His trusted soldier, and his innumerable hosts of angels casting out the dragon, the devil, Satan and his henchmen from those heavenly strongholds, and opening the gates of heaven to all believers. "*Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*" *

There are still many references in S. John's revelation of Satan, but none of them throws the slightest light as to there ever having been a 'fall of the angels.' Nor, for the matter of that, has there been much in the passages already examined to sustain the belief in the 'fall.' Of all the New Testament writers, S. Paul stands out pre-eminently as the scholar. He wrote more than half of the New Testament, yet never on one single occasion does he allude to any far-away disruption in the unique harmony which prevailed throughout heaven. He may possibly have thought that the subject was too academic to inflict upon the minds of the simple disciples of the Cross. S. Peter and S. Jude wrote of it, why not S. Paul? Did he believe in it, or did he regard it as a legend? We shall never know. Modern research would seem to point to a 'uselessness' and an 'impossibility' in the 'fall, and something which could have no place in the economy of God.

The majority of Christian people stoutly maintains this belief in order to account for the 'fall of man.' But if it can be shewn that man's sin need not depend in the least upon the 'fall' of angels of heaven—spirits of celestial brightness—then the last bulwark of support has been for ever destroyed.

* S. John xii. 31.

We therefore propose to ask a few questions, in the first place, on the reasons which brought about this terrible discomfiture of these angelic spirits.

What was the nature of their sin?

Theological professors have varied in their views on this subject, and well they might. "For Christians to whom our Incarnate Lord has opened the way into the unseen world, the personal existence of unfallen as well as fallen spirits, must be certain; and if God alone is uncreated, the spirits, no less than men, must be among His creatures; and if God is good, it must have been by a fall, the result of a refusal to love, and not by an original act of the Divine Creator, that any spirits have lost holiness."

In comment on this passage, we may say that no one questions the fact that the angels are God's created beings, endowed with the faculty of free-will; but if the angels fell through refusing to love, from whence emanated that refusal? It is absolutely impossible to believe that perfect holiness could evolve sin; as well believe that God could fall. S. Paul's indictment becomes at once a tissue of fooliness—"*Neither could corruption inherit incorruption*" *—and if this be accepted, then the only alternative is a belief that evil spirits existed anterior to the creation of the angels—a belief which leaves us far more mystified than before, as to the cause and purpose of this so-called 'fall' of these angels of light. No! the above scriptural quotation is not only unphilosophical, but quite illogical. This subject will be treated more fully when we enter upon the discussion of the 'fall of man.'

Another commentator informs us that the angels fell through *pride*. We are told that certain of them

* 1 Cor. xv. 50.

sought to rise to heaven's highest peaks, and from those dazzling heights would even challenge the absolute magnificence of God. The former comment applies equally to this. A thousand causes of the 'fall' may be furnished, if once we can solve that initial difficulty of the origin of sin. Pride is then as good as any other.

Still another theory has been propounded. It has been contended that when the unfallen angels were first informed that the Logos—the Second Person of the Ever-Blessed Trinity—would proceed to earth and be born of human flesh by the process of the Incarnation, a certain section refused to accept the truth. These same angels rebelled in thought at the idea of the Godhead touching human flesh, which indeed did take place in the hypostatic union, when Jesus was conceived and born of a virgin. Man was ever lower than the angels; man was sinful. "*Thou madest him (a man) a little lower than the angels.*" * "How could it be possible for God to degenerate Himself?" so it was argued. These rebel angels therefore ceased any longer to be in harmony with the Omnipotent; and thus they immediately fell.

In this theory, however, we must point out two great truths which have been overlooked:

Firstly, that the Incarnation was not an afterthought of God, an act dependent on man's 'fall,' but one quite independent of the Redemption. Its existence had been from everlasting in the oracles of God, and therefore the 'Logos' of the Godhead must inevitably have had his place in this world as the Jesus of human history.

Secondly, that from what has already been said as

* Heb. ii. 7.

to the occupation of the highest hierarchy of angels in heaven—seraphim, cherubim and thrones—which is the acquisition of the knowledge of God, and who find their highest bliss in such labour; how could any knowledge, be it the Incarnation or anything else, cause a revolt amongst their numbers? On the contrary, from what we know of the constitution of these heavenly beings, any addition of intelligence through the acceptance of spiritual wisdom must have filled them with unspeakable bliss.

Lastly, however, the theory that the angels (being the sons of God) fell through love of the daughters of men * (even though such an idea had the authority of Josephus) is altogether too foolish to expect any consideration. It has already been seen that a favourite interpretation for 'sons of God' and 'stars' has been the angelic host; but obviously no commentator of repute would submit on every occasion to any such cast-iron explanation. In the present instance we should have to believe that spirit encompassed with flesh, namely man, is capable of vibration with a spirit essentially free; that man born for an earthly existence had free access with a spirit created for a heavenly environment. Why, the two names, 'man' and 'god,' 'matter' and 'spirit,' are terms for creations inviolably distinct or separated—separated not in the sense that they do not act together, but in a scientific (chemical) meaning, that they represent two elements which can never form a compound.

But apart from this, if these 'sons of God' are still to be regarded as angels, and were created long before God made the world (for we must believe that they

* Gen. vi. 1-4.

constituted His Court), the 'daughters of men' with whom they loved and sinned, had never known any earthly existence for æons of time afterwards. The 'sons of God' and 'daughters of men' surely refer to the descendants of Seth and Cain, or maybe those of pre-Adamic men. Such a theory, however, is completely obliterated by Christ's own words, "*They neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.*" *

We ask the reader if the biblical evidence for the 'fall of the angels' has any more foundation for its truth than the *theories* on 'how the fall took place.' It is easy enough to say, "Sin we know is in the world, and must have been brought here"; but it is quite another matter to maintain "that sin was spread throughout the world by the medium of fallen angels."

We assert that this 'fall' has little proof for its belief, and the belief again sinks into insignificance when faced with these following inevitable difficulties:

(*a*) If these heavenly spirits, which now are represented by Satan and his hosts, are compelled to live in hell in everlasting alienation from God, how is it possible to believe that the Almighty Father could pass so terrible a sentence on them? Nay, from being angels of light, how could they possibly sink to such infinite depths of iniquity and loathsomeness, in which their natures must have been absolutely changed and inexorably reversed, without one distant hope of a revolutionary salvation? Is there a limit to the Redemption of the Son of God?

(*b*) Is the power of Satan greater than the power of God? It is almost blasphemous to put the question, yet no one believes that these so-called fallen angels

* S. Matt. xxii. 30.

have even been influenced to strive and regain the presence of God. In other words, we are asked to believe that holy spirits might and did fall, but for some unaccountable reason, those same spirits might never rise and attain their former position.

(*c*) Was the 'fall' of the angels one definite occurrence, or may we regard it as an act infinitely repeated? If not, why not? The position of the angels, save that now their attainment of knowledge is wonderfully beyond what it was then, is precisely the same in the one case as in the other. One might certainly assume that there was a greater possibility of the angels falling to-day since those whose duty consists in guiding and guarding the souls of evil men perpetually come in contact with sin. Before the creation of man, when the 'fall' is said to have taken place, this temptation was non-existent. Why, then, should these angels of *pre-historic date* fall, when *now* we are told, it is not only impossible, but inconceivable?

No satisfactory answer can be given. If it be asserted that the great facts of Christ's Incarnation and Redemption have wrought changes in God's universe of an illimitable character, we do know this, that human nature still remains the same, and without evidence to the contrary, we should certainly hold that no change has become effected in the constitution of angelic spirits. They remain as they have been from the very beginning.

(*d*) Holy Scripture most emphatically teaches that after death the soul of man released from its bodily environment, is immune for ever from the temptation of Satan and his hosts; and that the life in heaven is absolutely beyond anything that is evil. "And *there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth,*

neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie." * In view of this, how is it logically possible to believe that in heaven—a state of ecstatic holiness—sin for the first time was brought into existence? To accept the orthodox belief, these holy angels for no apparent reason, converted themselves into beings whose aspirations were the complete antithesis of what they were a moment before; performed the impossible act of translating incorruption into corruption—a condition which brought them into total opposition towards God. They would seem to have spasmodically created evil out of perfect goodness, to have at last achieved a degenerate condition of which they had no previous knowledge. Such logic is from every point of view absurdly ridiculous.

But this is not the full limit of the difficulty to which the contention brings them. May we not reasonably ask, "Where is the guarantee that those who have reached the 'comfort' of Abraham's bosom or higher still, the realms of bliss, may not be dragged down into the bottomless pit? If holy angels fell from heaven through surrender to the temptations of the Evil One, why should not the spirits of men fall in a similar way?"

The query seems unanswerable if left to itself, but Christianity unquestionably teaches us that we are immune from the influence of Satan in both of these spheres or conditions. And if the power of temptation will be lost on us after our earthly life, how could we possibly believe that the angels, who are more spiritual than ourselves, could fall as a result of Satanic influence?

This idea is unthinkable also because the reliability

* Rev. xxi. 27.

of God's holy servants, ever being ready and competent to achieve His sacred Purpose, would then be immediately doubted. If heaven is incapable of being assailed and partially destroyed in our own day by the powers of darkness, how could we deem it possible under any circumstance or at any time ?

With all these difficulties before us and so little, if any, direct biblical evidence to prove such a belief, we can hardly be blamed if we state that such an opinion was the fanciful fruit of an over-credulous age. It is not impossible for us to believe in the existence of evil spirits, apart from those who are said to have fallen from heaven.

And this releases the problem of much of its obscurity.

To sum up the enquiry. We should say that it is quite unnecessary to believe that Satan was ever an angel of light, but as to how sin first proclaimed its birth, we must leave to the study of the ' Fall of Man.'

CHAPTER XV

The Origin of Sin and the Fall of Man

It will be seen from what has already been said that holiness could never of itself bring forth sin. Satan could never be the sinful name of Lucifer. The 'fall' of angels of light could never be an historic fact. The difficulties which were put forward in the preceding chapter, and which must inevitably follow as the result of such a belief, difficulties which claim to be unanswerable, must cause us to admit that the belief in an angelic 'fall' is opposed to the reason of man. But if it can be shewn that such a belief is by no means necessary, then any further argument need no longer be advanced.

When, however, we turn from the angels to men, the histories of these two creations are quite different. Man from the beginning of his creation has committed sin. He has broken God's laws; for sin, according to S. Paul, is lawlessness. Being made innocent, he would always have remained innocent, had he never been confronted with something that was evil. In other words, evil spirits had a position in God's universe, whose function it was to drag man from his place of innocence to one of iniquity with the devil and his hosts.

It may, however, be asked, "If the devil and his

followers were not the fallen angels who once had been the inhabitants of heavenly spheres, where could they in the first place have come from? Surely any other theory which could possibly be advanced is more difficult of explanation than the one which has been discarded." "You are asking," say they, "to admit that the devil was created out of nothing."

Patience! We shall find that it is possible to sweep all these difficulties away if we expend upon them a little close examination. We need for a moment to meditate on the personality of God Himself. He has lived from everlasting, and was never created. We know something about God, almost entirely through His attributes. He is the personification of holiness, love, power and wisdom. These are qualifications of His own Living Personality. None of these qualities could exist of themselves. They are abstract terms, and are merely names given to a summary of definite actions performed by the particular being. It would be quite wrong, for instance, to say that God was merely holiness and nothing else. God is not an abstract virtue, but He is a concrete Being. Holiness, Love, or any other God-like attribute is not God Himself, but it represents a characteristic quality of His nature.

Now let us apply the same argument to the opposite side. What is sin? In its broadest meaning, it is the very extreme of holiness, and like the latter, is an abstract term, which never can be a concrete thing. Like all the God-like virtues which are the striking characteristics of the nature of a concrete living Deity, so sin, for the very same reason, is but the abstract characteristic of a being, which must obviously be the antithesis of an all-holy God. Sin, therefore, presupposes the existence of the devil and evil angels.

It may be said, however, and is believed by many, that sin is a purely negative term. We merely experience it when we fail in our holiness.

If this be so, then the converse argument ought to be true, namely, that holiness is the negation of evil. Suppose we look out upon the world and come to the conclusion that there is as much evil as goodness in the lives of men, then to one who believes in negatives, it will be most difficult to overthrow the sincerity of his logic when he says, ' God is the negation of Evil.' ' Evil is the positive condition for mankind, and when a man shews any virtue in his life, it is by the demonstration of a negation.'

This method of argument is plainly wrong. Even when we think of light, with its wonderful characteristics, we do not say that it finds its negative in darkness. What is light ? It is an abstract term given to what is sent forth in the form of waves from burning gases. Concrete matter in a certain physical condition sends forth what is known as light ; or, in other words, waves of certain dimensions, projected at great speed through the ether of space, and capable of being absorbed by the retina of the human eye, from whence man's brain gives him the expression of a pure, immaculate light.

This light, which is white, is a combination of seven elemental colours—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet—arranged in a row, and called a spectrum. At the extreme ends, blackness prevails. Is this darkness the negative of light ? Certainly not. Just outside the violet end of the spectrum, rays or waves are travelling through space which have a chemical power, and which find their principal use in the art of photography. Similarly there are X-rays and radium rays, the existence of which have only

been discovered by their physical or chemical power. Our senses are very limited, and thus it becomes foolish to talk of one phenomenon being the negative of another.

Therefore, when we come back to the origin of sin, we find that it implies the existence of evil spirits just as goodness implies the existence of God and the holy angels. Further, as a necessary conclusion of the argument, the period over which goodness and evil have extended must have been the same.

Did God create Satan? The prophet Isaiah speaks in a most remarkable manner concerning God: "*I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and 'create evil'; I the Lord do all these things.*" * One has previously discovered how difficult it is to obtain the literal meaning of a prophetic passage. Such a reference may mean nothing more than the language of the chastisement of sin, and thus have no connection at all with the problem before us.

It may safely be understood that God did not create Satan.

God Himself was not created; neither in all probability was Satan. We do not pretend to know the infinite Will of God. When, therefore, we speak of God's Omnipotence, we do not imagine that God can perform everything, but only all possible things, which come within the range of His Almighty Will. The attributes of His All-Glorious Being stand out in greater relief because of the existence of sin; and strange though it may seem, man will ultimately become a more exalted being because of his experience of sin, than he could possibly have been without it.

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* Isaiah xlv. 6, 7.

Neither can it be truthfully said that God permits sin to assail us for some unknown purpose. We need to realise exactly what man is. Though in many respects we favour the animal, we are the head and crown of creation, and possess something of infinite worth which the animal can never have. Its biblical name is a 'living soul.' "*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul.*" * In other words, we possess the power of free-will; we are given the possibility of choice.

If the possession of free-will is the gift which makes us man, a being superior to the animal, then to prevent us from falling into sin is just one of those deeds which God could not do without spoiling the highest of His created beings, and reducing it to the same level as the beasts of the field. It remains entirely with man alone. He only, with the two roads before him, can make his choice as to whether of the twain he deems to be the better.

It is not a question whether God should have or should have not permitted or prevented mankind from sinning; for man's sinfulness has entirely emanated from his possession of free-will. Man, in the first instance, was innocent; he possessed no such thing as character. Yet to-day innocence is an attribute which may be and is applied to all inanimate creation, and all animate matter short of man. For example, we do not contend for a moment that anything subordinate to man has any moral sense. A horse or a dog may seem at times to display many moral functions, but a closer scrutiny will reveal the fact that his actions are merely the expressions of

* Gen. ii. 7.

instincts which are no more than hereditary tendencies. A dog or cat may be cured by legitimate punishment from his habit of theft. He knows perfectly well that for his stealing he receives the whip; and this is constantly repeated until his sense of pain over-masters his desire of taking any unpermitted food.

There have been people who have striven to promulgate a theory that the moral sense of man is but an evolution of these primitive instincts. This, however, is foolish. Every generation of animal species must be taught to abstain from certain acts by an external treatment of which it is afraid; whereas man, when he attains to the conscious, reasoning state, finds that he is already endowed with a sense of what is right and wrong.

Further, it is this sense, allied with that of intellect, which has raised man altogether beyond the limits of animal life. We can say of man, and we expect of him, that he instinctively knows and appreciates the rights of his fellow-man; but we have yet to find the first man who could claim any kind of moral sense for the brute beast.

The entire story of the 'fall of man' depends upon his possession of this gift of God—the gift of free-will. Without it we should have always remained innocent, but non-moral. Without free-will, sin could never have entered into the world, nor, indeed, could righteousness. As creatures of instinct, we should have obeyed every impulse of the moment. Like the moth fascinated by the candlelight, finds its physical destruction in the thing it most desires, so should we have lived a life, essentially physical, but one which could never have had the least claim to praise, because it would have been bereft of those overshadowing wings

of morality and spirituality which alone prevent that life from finding its end in a hideous death of material excesses.

It will be seen, therefore, that for a man to rise to any sense of dignity and to aspire, however humbly, to the dazzling attributes of God, sin must be present. It is absolutely and universally necessary. And sin makes itself evident to the human being through the process of temptation. There is a never-ending warfare in every human heart—a contest with the forces of the world, the flesh and the devil.

To think that it would have been better for God never to have allowed us so to be treated, is to entertain not only a stupid but a most unworthy thought. Nay, more, it is to imagine of God something which it is impossible for Him to grant. To have kept us out of this spiritual contest would have been to spoil for ever the establishment of character. It is only by intercourse with our fellow-men, by their words of knowledge and their books of wisdom, that our intellects are made sharper and more capable ; so also, it is only by the soul's warfare with sin that our individual soul can ever comprehend the glory of a perfectly spiritual man, a man who has emerged from the fight, bruised though he may be with many a painful wound, yet dauntless and unconquered, fit for the company of heaven.

Surely no one can dispute the fact that it is only men who fight and are victorious who may claim that the greatness they have achieved is infinitely beyond anything that mere innocency could have attained.

When we see how much misery, sorrow and woe prevails in the world as a direct result of the deeds of sinful men, we are bound to express the wish that it

would have been incalculably the better if man had not made that fatal choice through the fascinations and temporal glory of a changing world.

But all is not lost. Vice is met at every step by the powers of virtue. The forces of righteousness are slowly crushing those of iniquity. The Kingdom of God is enveloping the world, and cannot be checked; and the vision which lies beyond is one of triumph. Whatever we might have hoped for is of little moment in this discussion. A fatal choice was made. It is put very strikingly in the story of Eden. Our first parents had placed before them two courses, one of which only they might adopt. Unfortunately, they chose wrongly, like we are doing every day of our lives. We, with all our past experience, continue to eat the forbidden fruit because of its present desirability; we therefore fall, and feel sin's consequences.

But someone may say, "Why did not God give to man a perfect will, for then he could have resisted the powers of darkness?" Such a query is based upon a dreadful fallacy. The will which God gave to man was essentially perfect. To deny it is to state that the will-power man now possesses is incapable of direct choice.

No, man's will is so perfectly balanced that it swings immediately to the good or to the evil, according as to which puts forth the stronger force at the moment. We therefore see how tremendously important man's free-will becomes in working out his destiny. God wills not that any should perish. His love for mankind is infinite, unfathomable. Yet He never interferes, nor drags men unwillingly from any pathway they may have chosen. To do so would be to break man's choice, to take away his manhood, and to make him act as an automaton.

Learned men have taught and are teaching to-day, that God could have created human beings holy, if He had so desired. He never tried, because He could not do any such thing. What God did was to make man innocent, not holy. The only concession to such a remark would be that had God made His earthly beings good, lovable, faithful and sinless, they could never have been men. The character of man, the triumph of his nature, spring entirely in the man himself. God helps by giving to His children the things that they ask for, but these must be assimilated alone by the latter, in the process of building the spiritual life.

In the parable of the 'Prodigal Son,' the father never interfered with his younger son in the choice that he had made, even though such conduct was breaking his heart. In fact, the father was useless until that son by the exercise of his free-will, made another choice, which led him back once more to the homestead. Then, and not till then, could the parent give his son those joys which the latter used, to aspire to higher things.

The one great act which God has never yet performed, is to endow His child with a perfect moral character. Character must inevitably be the result of man's moral being. Christ, we know, was sorely tempted during His earthly lifetime. He suffered, but never fell. He saw the full depth of iniquity, but evaded its pitfalls. This He did as a man. The argument is of no use which implies that His Manhood was protected from sin by reason of His Godhead. It only succeeds in making His Manhood vastly different from our own, and to lose for ever in Him a perfect example.

In this contention we are supported on every hand

by Holy Scripture: "*He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*" * "*It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.*" † "*Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.*" ‡ "*My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in suffering.*" §

Christ, therefore, was a perfect man, and as such conquered Satan by sheer force of will. He had on every occasion to use His will, and the fact that He is the one Perfect Man, proves that on every opportunity which was presented to Him He fought for God and prevailed.

Similarly with respect to the holy angels, they undoubtedly were beings of free-will. We cannot argue, it is true, that the possibility of sinning was from everlasting removed from them. Such a conclusion would take from them all intelligence; but we are still entitled to hold that, like our blessed Lord, they were stronger than the evil spirits to whom they were opposed, and triumphed through their godliness.

And even when we turn to man, there have been earthly characters which have almost touched the heavenly standard. Enoch and Elijah passed from earth to heaven, and S. Paul, even in his earthly life, was translated into the paradise of God.

It is possible to conquer almost every sin, if we were perpetually prepared and clothed with the armour of God. Listen to these words of encouragement: "*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer*

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* Heb. iv. 15.
† Heb. ii. 10.
‡ Heb. v. 8.
§ 2 Cor. xii. 9

you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make 'the' way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." *

The obvious meaning of the passage is that man's spiritual fight is never at any time altogether hopeless. Thus the origin of sin needs no 'fall of angels' for its acceptance. The devil or Satan has existed from everlasting. Man, the possessor of free-will, and capable of choosing any moral course, accepted the devil's terms; and by that act, sin entered into the world. Through the Incarnation and Atonement of the Son of God, a way is made for sinful man, a way that leads to God.

* 1 Cor. x. 13. R. V.

CHAPTER XVI

Hell

THERE has perhaps been no subject, except this of hell, in the whole range of biblical literature, upon which men's minds have differed so widely, nor has there been any subject upon which so many grave mistakes have been made, and these so fundamental, that it often makes us wonder why the teachers and preachers of past times have allowed their imagination to crush entirely their power of reasoning.

It is not a question whether hell truly exists or no. Every Christian must admit that it is a part of the teaching of our Lord, and because of that, calls upon every individual to strive to discover what revelation has shewn the life in hell to be, as contrasted with the pictures, fanciful and horrible, of that state which has been the outcome of imaginative thought. Christ, in His teaching of this nether world, likened it to a *fire*, to *a worm that dieth not, and a fire that is never quenched.**

But, as we have shewn before, even the words of Jesus Christ must not be taken as a literal description of something mysterious; particularly where human language is infinitely incompetent to fix a true meaning

* S. Mark ix. 43, 44.

in the mind of man. All spiritual truths are clothed with anthropomorphic language, otherwise we should remain in this life completely devoid of any heavenly truth. But when we come to some of the greatest mysteries which God has revealed, does it not appear to the most simple of students that we should walk very warily and proceed very slowly ?

It is entirely because a literal interpretation has been given to the Gospel that these grave mistakes have been made. There was a time when the whole Church believed in a physical hell of material fire. Those who reached that place or condition were subjected to a burning of excruciating torment, which never consumed the body, and allowed it to remain in this indescribable torture throughout eternity.

Tomes upon tomes of literature have been written in mediæval and even later times, in which the most minute details of hell's woe are depicted. No useful purpose would be gained by reproducing the language. In the main, it is so utterly revolting, and makes of God so frightful an Avenger, that had it continued to these latter days it would have been the most potent agent in causing men to disbelieve in a Deity so shockingly vicious.

In fact, it would have called for no great effort of the mind of man to have imagined that God and Satan were interchangeable names. We are told, however, that men have long since ceased to believe in a hell of physical torture. And not before its time. Such a belief is based upon a fundamental error. Man in hell is entirely spiritual, and not material. He will still retain his tripartite nature—body, soul and spirit—but all spiritual.

How could it be possible for a material fire, which can only exist amongst material things, to touch in

any kind of way the entities of spiritual constitution? Here we are dealing with two essentially different worlds or conditions. Nothing could be more strikingly true than the whole of the fifteenth chapter of S. Paul's former Epistle to the Corinthians, in which this great truism is brought forth. If flesh and blood cannot inherit eternal life, how is it possible to believe that physical fire can force its way there? The idea is preposterous.

Well, then, we are told, if the torture is not a material one, it must be mental.

Does this idea make of hell a more desirable condition? Does it alter, by the slightest degree, our estimate of God? Mental suffering may be, perchance, far more difficult to bear than the material flame. And that this, like the other, must continue everlastingly is once more to attribute to God something wholly antagonistic to the mental picture of 'Our Father' as drawn by the Incarnate Son.

Mark you, up to the present we have only described hell as it is understood by innumerable Christians. We do not deny its existence nor that it has its torments, but not meted out in the fashion previously described. At the beginning of an enquiry such as this, we must have our fundamentals firmly and irrevocably fixed. We must recognise the great attributes of God; we must understand that He is not interchangeable but unchangeable, that after this earthly life, 'time' ceases to have any meaning. With Him, time never passes. There is no future, no past, but one eternal present. "*One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*" * In God is seen the personification of justice. "*Shall*

* 1 Pet. iii. 8.

not the Judge of all the earth do right?" * This alone is quite sufficient to shew that the popular theory of hell can have no existence in reality. Men must be judged according to their deeds. But the popular hell has no ending; all lost beings are thrown indiscriminately into it, and endure an everlasting punishment.

This is merely an illustration to shew how far away from truth our minds will lead us if our reasoning is not built upon what we know of God. Let us, therefore, clear those minds of all things material, so far as we are able, in the contemplation of true spiritual experiences and conditions.

Sin presupposes hell. Hell is no more and no less than God's punishment of the law-breaker. On one occasion Christ's statement as to the locality of the kingdom of heaven was very remarkable: *"The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or Lo there! for behold the kingdom of God is within you."* † And if this be true of the kingdom of God, it must also be true of the kingdom of the world.

We are perfectly conscious that God rules us from within. By no erratic interferences, but by unchangeable laws which are the expression of His Divine Will, are we ruled both here and in eternity. The punishment accorded to an evil man for the sinful deed he perpetrates is simply a matter of cause and effect. The effect of sin is retribution. This takes place in calm serenity. There is no need for God to display such a weakness as rage. It would destroy man's conception of His Almighty Majesty. God has established a method of procedure which works

* Gen. xviii. 25. † S. Luke xvii. 20, 21.

infallibly. The sinner is made to feel the reaction of his sin ; he is left to the consequences of his conduct, to the vileness of his passions, to the reproaches of his conscience, to the remorse of an unquenchable memory, to the perfidy of his corrupted and immoral soul.

Hell is just the atmosphere of his own degradation. It is the antagonism of a human soul to God. Thus man feels the terrors of hell in this life. It is no idle expression, but a positive truth, when we hear of people who have ' passed through hell ' ; for hell is no definite place, but a spiritual state, an inward condition of mind, an experience which those who defy God must necessarily pass through. And in accordance with the nature of a man's sin, so must his hell be.

Its punishment is endless in its variety. In this world, a loss of love, a weakening of the intellect, a sinking into poverty, a condition when man is afraid of himself, his fellow-man, but ten thousand times more afraid of God ; when he sees death approaching and he knows that his days are numbered, when the light of divine hope has become extinguished, and all is chaos and impenetrable darkness ; is not this a hell as black as we could ever contemplate for the vilest sinner ? And men experience all this, even in their earthly lives.

In this world, however, it would be difficult to imagine any human being who has not felt the power and influence of love. There have been, at least, a few occasions when a gentle hand has been stretched forth to stem the awful pace with which such sinners have flung themselves into the hands of Satan. But with the approach of death, all opportunity for reclamation has passed beyond the reach of the impenitent. Through the darkness of Hades, he passes into the more awful blackness of Tartarus or hell

proper. From that condition there can never advance any light, and towards it can never proceed the slightest ray of holiness.

The circumstances surrounding the sinner in the condition of hell must be intensified illimitably from what they were on earth. As with the redeemed, when all the faculties of body, soul and spirit move in wondrous harmony, so must those same faculties, in the case of the lost, cripple themselves in their misbalanced energies and unutterable discordancy.

Yet God remains the same—the All-Holy, the All-powerful Deity. He never intended this for man. It is no expression of any malice or vindictiveness, for such attributes are alien to His Nature. Every being who reaches hell will undoubtedly know that he could never have fallen into such a condition of utter degeneracy except through an all-absorbing desire on his own part. Being a creature of free-will, he made a deliberate choice, a choice which ended in disaster.

God and His all-loving graces have been scorned by every human inhabitant of hell. Hatred has been insistently chosen as a more engaging pursuit than love, and having passed through death into the ultimate condition of hell, the punishment provided for that being is in the terms of the strictest justice.

It has been thought by some that hell is remedial, an educative condition which restores the sinner to the saint. But this cannot be. If hell be a sphere where God is completely forgotten, and ruled over in majestic power by Satan, who has never experienced the faintest glimmerings of virtue, how is it possible for the slightest germ of hope to grow and develop in hell? How could an impenitent inhabitant cry for restoration, a condition which has no meaning to such a being, and particularly in that sphere, where love,

joy, hope and peace are for ever eliminated? No. Hell is an irrevocable condition.

And do not our Lord's own words justify this belief when, in speaking of Judas Iscariot, He says, "*It had been good for that man, if he had not been born*"? * Further, in speaking of sin and its forgiveness, He speaks of sin against the Holy Ghost: "*But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.*" † The sin against the Holy Ghost is the sin of absolute alienation from God, when God is completely shut out of the life of the man, and his spirit moves in harmony with the devil.

Such a man does not want God; he finds no attraction in Him, one who has wilfully rejected God's Holy Spirit and sought protection at the hands of Satan. If there be no all-powerful influences that can draw the man to recognise God as his Lord in this life, why should it be thought possible for such a force to become existent in hell, where God is for ever excluded?

And as for sin being remedial, which is the basis of the belief in eternal hope, we should have thought that the very opposite would have taken place. In our study of the angels, we admitted the possibility of heaven becoming brighter and more glorious in eternity through the acquisition of the knowledge of God, first of all through the contemplative angels, and then through the several hierarchies even to restored manhood. And if this be so, then the greater brightness of heaven demands a similarly greater blackness of hell. The shadow of any material object is proportionately intensified with the vividness of the light. And yet, even if we admit that the punishment

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* S. Matt. xxvi. 24. † S. Mark iii. 29.

of hell has been brought about through man's deliberate choice, we are apt to think that the penalty is, after all, too great, if extended throughout eternity.

We mentioned quite recently that in a spiritual condition *time* does not exist. This, however, will help us only very slightly, unless we possess a true meaning of the expression. For instance, as inhabitants of the earth, we should be quite correct in saying that heaven is four hundred years older than at the time of the Reformation. But those who have passed from this world, and are now in a spiritual condition, could not possibly use such words. Time is a phenomenon only understood by dwellers upon planets. The earth moves round its axis, and thus demonstrates to us varying degrees of light. It is very feeble in the early morn because the light comes from a sun which is said not to have risen. Gradually it increases in its luminosity and declines once more when the sun disappears or sets. This period is called 'day,' and is followed by 'night,' when darkness prevails.

We regulate our earthly lives in strict accordance with this phenomenon. Even if we are not an active witness of the passage of light, by allowing ourselves to sleep, we are still conscious that the day has progressed through the standard of the brilliance having diminished.

We leave this for a moment to consider another feature. In the earth-life we age with increasing years. No man can check the advance of age. Our food, our habits, our environment, our society, our temperament —all play their part in changing the appearance of our countenance over a number of years; but none, nor all these forces can prevent this vital change. Through experience, we become able to gauge a person's age by

examining his face; and the more experience we obtain, the more competent we become.

Now place mankind on a sphere in which age could not assert itself, nor light be a variable phenomenon, but the entire atmosphere of his surroundings suffused with a uniform light; then time could not be estimated, for the condition would be one of eternal present. That is what is meant by the 'present' of heaven and hell. It does not mean that we could never regulate the deeds nor classify their relationships in these spiritual conditions, but rather that a 'past' cannot exist, for it entails so many wearying regrets over duties left undone; nor a 'future,' since its existence would create the anxious looking-forward to a condition when hopes will either be gratified or unfulfilled. Therefore in hell and heaven, we shall be without those ordinary instruments for measuring time, and thus time will not exist in the sense we understand it now.

This conception does not in the least interfere with the sequence of events which must inevitably follow upon one another in these non-earthly spheres. They will take place in accordance with their accustomed order, and will be at once realised by those who are living in that condition.

This short digression seemed necessary to alleviate the horror of those who imagine that in hell men will be punished through millions of years for their fall whilst dwellers on the earth. Eternity is not illimitable time. The difficulty of understanding all this is not lessened by the most lucid explanation, and we can easily forgive our neighbours for using terms and statements which imply 'time,' because the power of earthly expressions precludes them from the use of more exact phrases. They speak anthropomorphically.

Let us attempt to give an answer to one or two of these anthropomorphic questions, always with the understanding that we are fully conscious of their limitability.

And first of all, must the impenitent sinner, whose destiny is hell, suffer throughout a time immeasurable? It is argued by some that if a limit is put to the existence of the sinner in hell, there must also be a limit to the bliss of the saint in heaven. This conclusion by no means follows.

It is difficult to understand why God created man, if after his fall and restoration, there should be a limit to the heavenly life, for it was out of love that God created man. And on the contrary, it is extremely easy to understand, when we think of the perfect justice of God, that man in hell, when he has paid for all his misdeeds, should at once cease to be chastised.

To support this contention we turn to a remarkable passage in one of S. Paul's letters: "*For the wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life.*" * The two expressions which demand our attention are 'wages' and 'gift of God.' Wages are calculable. They are given in payment for definite and measurable work which has been accomplished. Moreover, exact wages give satisfaction to the worker. They are finite. Man is a finite being. The sin of which he is guilty, though it may be incredibly beyond what he could ever calculate, is still capable of being estimated. In other words, it is finite; and the punishment for finite sin must obviously be finite also. Therefore in hell we may well believe that for each individual being, there are stages when the punishment must inevitably cease. We are not indicating in the least that the

* Rom. vi. 23.

condition known as hell will cease, but only of the once-inhabitants of earth who are living in that degenerated sphere.

What then? They cease to exist. For them, there is nothing short of annihilation. Is not this conclusion a right one? It is Christ who speaks: "*Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*" * A destruction is surely an annihilation, a complete death, not an existence in hell through æons of time, but an absolute death—extinction. Christ distinctly speaks of two deaths. The death of the body, of which we all are conscious, the natural body which will never live again. Then there is the death of the body and soul, which only takes place in hell, and which naturally means the complete disintegration for ever of the full spiritual man. For him there is no prospect of life again. He disappears like the extinguished flame of a candle. This is what is indicated by the 'second death.'

Here are two references by S. John: "*He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.*" † "*And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*" ‡ The human inhabitant of hell has paid his just and rightful penance for the deeds done in the flesh, and ceases to be.

Again, we are asked, what will be the ultimate condition of Satan and his hosts? Will they, like his human companions, cease to be, and fall a prey to the 'second death'?

The difficulty of answering such a question is obviously supreme, but in view of the fact of what our Lord said, "*to go into hell, into the fire that never*

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* S. Matt. x. 28. † Rev. ii. 11. ‡ Rev. xx. 14.

shall be quenched," * the greatest probability seems to be that they will live for ever. The condition of hell is for eternity. It has been shewn in a previous chapter that the existence of God and His heaven necessitated the existence of Satan and his hell. And if both personalities existed for an eternity before the 'drama of man' could ever have taken place, then the logical conclusion must assert that Satan, like God, exists throughout eternity.

Now let us turn to the expression 'the gift of God.' A true gift, whether from man or God, is incalculable, immeasurable. Think of the thought and love bestowed upon it by the donor! Who can estimate its value? A gift from God is of infinite worth. Thus eternal life, which in this instance is the bliss of heaven, is never-ending. It is like God Himself, from everlasting to everlasting.

* S. Mark ix. 43.

CHAPTER XVII

Heaven

THE reader will have already perceived the almost insurmountable difficulty of speaking about spiritual beings and existences with any degree of exactitude. The moment we begin to describe anything spiritual, we are at once aware that we are struggling under great disadvantages. Living as we do in the midst of an earthly and physical environment, and conscious also that we shall never have in this life the slightest opportunity of viewing phenomena wholly spiritual, except under this disability, small wonder that we fall into the use of anthropomorphic expression, and speak of the spirit as though it were entirely material.

The difficulty has been mentioned before, and in no instance, perhaps, more strikingly than in an attempt to describe heaven—the condition of the blessed. S. John, in his Revelation, more than any other of the inspired writers, gives us one after another wonderful pictures of the Heavenly Jerusalem, the abode of God. The foundations are of precious stones, the streets of gold, the gates of pearl—a description which could hardly be more material. The ' many mansions ' of our Lord no less fall into the same category. Yet how otherwise was it possible to bring to the simple minds

of men any other idea of the gorgeousness of the beauty of heaven?

We must be particularly clear in our minds that heaven cannot be a 'place' in the generally-accepted meaning of the word. It can have no limitations. True it is that in one moment we speak of God being present specially in heaven, and manifesting His glory in a peculiar manner there; and in the next we are told that God is so majestic that even the heavens cannot contain Him.

S. John, in addition to his description of the 'place' of heaven, tells us most definitely that vice, which tarnishes the soul of man on earth, has no place in heaven. The preponderating characteristic of heaven is holiness. "*And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie.*" * S. Paul, too, is equally dogmatic: "*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.*" †

Again, if we refer to S. John, we find a curious expression, which forms part of his description of heaven: "*And there shall be no more sea.*" ‡ Here, in a very high degree, he must be speaking in the language of parable. The sea is a separating barrier, much more two thousand years ago than to-day, with all our methods of transit, which creates that closer union of race and clime. Heaven knows of no restrictions, no separations, no barriers, but rather we read: "*After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands; and*

* Rev. xxi. 27. † 1 Cor. ii. 9. ‡ Rev. xxi. 1.

cried with a loud voice saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb." *

But the sea speaks of change.

There is to-day the mighty tempest, carrying destruction in its wake, and to-morrow presenting a face of such wondrous tranquillity that it leaves us wrapt in contemplation. Heaven knows none of this. The life of love and joy and peace is one of serenity and calm, ever bearing a smiling face through all eternity. The troubled waters of the sea find no replica here.

And yet, again, the sea speaks to us of mysteries, deep and inexplicable. How infinite the contrast! Heaven is a condition, where mysteries shall be no more. *"For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."* † Thus the sea, viewed as an emblem of mystery, must inevitably be closed against any agency which would mar the brightness of eternal truth.

So far, we have been chiefly concerned with the knowledge that heaven will possess some of the characteristics of human life which look for perfection, and, on the contrary, be repellent towards others, which shew an antagonism towards righteousness in its many forms. Now let us extend our horizon in the way of attempting to understand one or two of the inherent attributes of God. It will help us in our enquiry.

God, because of His nature, cannot be circumvented. He is omnipresent, immanent and all-containing. He is the great and eternal Law-Giver, and every law which regulates the physical and spiritual worlds are but reflections of His All-Divine Will. The inanimate universe works in complete and majestic harmony,

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* Rev. vii. 9, 10. † Cor. xiii. 12.

simply because it cannot break one of those perfect laws. God's Will here is supreme. In the animate world, and more particularly in man, after his purification in Purgatory, will pursue a will whose tendency is to work in harmony with the Will of God. As a result, a perfect harmony will prevail; and when that condition is achieved, heaven is found.

Thus, as a direct result of this reasoning, if it were possible for any human being to live in this world, so absorbed in God that no discordant vibration could ever cause a ripple upon the shining surface of his character, then heaven would be already gained. But knowing the impossibility of this condition for any soul on earth, it needs those purifying instruments of the Expectant Church to effect just that supreme and perfected character which brings heaven to him. Thus heaven must be a condition, and not a place.

Our blessed Lord seems to emphasise this great truth when He speaks: "*Even the Son of Man, which is in heaven.*" * Notice the present tense. Here, He is not speaking of something that is past, nor that is to come, but of a present existence, only obtainable through the perfect harmony which had always prevailed between the Eternal Father and His Incarnate Son.

Or once again. It is Christ who speaks: "*Neither shall they say, Lo here! or Lo there! for behold the Kingdom of God is within you.*" † In the previous verse He had warned the Pharisees of the entire misapprehension which had dulled their sight to the true vision of the Kingdom of God. They thought it must be material, and could not grasp the idea that it was pre-eminently spiritual; and because of that fact,

* S. John iii. 13. † S. Luke xvii. 21.

He says: *"The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation."* * In much the same way does the persecuted Jesus address Pontius Pilate as He stands before the judgment-seat: *"My Kingdom is not of this world."* † And although we are fully aware that the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven, as mentioned in the parables, nearly always refers to the Militant Church on earth, there are obvious occasions when its meaning cannot possibly be detached from the perfected Church of God, the Church of Triumph in Heaven.

At the risk of being considered wearisome one must reiterate the truth, that when a man has reached supremacy of character he is in the condition of heaven. But when we ordinarily speak of heaven, we are conscious that the word is applied in a special sense to the spiritual world where God and His angels for ever dwell. Heaven will not be a howling wilderness, in which men will live apart from recognisable intercourse. If joy is to be one of the great factors in the development of happiness and blessedness, there must be reunion and recognition to an infinitely greater extent than was possible in Purgatory.

It is one thing to have attained heaven by the perfection of character, but heaven would not have fulfilled its promise if man did not enjoy those endless blessings and follow those celestial pursuits, incomprehensible in their diversity, which further enhance the glory of his heavenly being. Our achievements of earth are no sort of criterion of what we may aspire to in the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. The earthly body is too often a hindrance to the fulfilment of our ideals.

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* S. Luke xvii. 20. † S. John xviii. 36.

This is finely expressed by S. Paul: "*How to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.*" * Yet in heaven, clothed upon with a spiritual body and enclosed within a harmoniously spiritual environment, who can estimate the limit of attainment? To live in idleness and irresponsibility is the very antithesis of the life of glorified mankind. Heaven presents a life which is at once a continuation and development of the life on earth—a development which has no limit and which is absolutely beyond our wildest conceptions.

The writings of many of the ancient Fathers are of little value when brought to bear on such subjects as this, because of their gross materialism. In speaking, for example, of one source of joy which will fill the hearts of the ransomed to full expansion, we find references from their writings of a 'permission' which will be given to the saints in glory of gazing upon the tortures of the damned.

S. Thomas Aquinas says: "*That the saints, may enjoy their beatitudes more richly, a perfect sight is granted to them of the tortures of the damned.*"

Tertullian also affirms: "*At that greatest of all spectacles, how I shall admire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult, when I shall behold so many proud monarchs, groaning in the lowest abyss of darkness; so many magistrates liquefying in fiercer flames than they ever kindled against the Christians; so many sage philosophers blushing in red-hot irons, with their deluded pupils; so many musicians more tuneful than ever in the expression of their woe; so many dancers tripping more nimbly from anguish, than ever before from applause.*"

* Rom. vii. 18, 19.

One cannot but think that such writers as these were all unwittingly libelling the Name of God, and striving to find a joy which, if fulfilled, could only succeed in dooming them to an eternal grief. The joys of heaven could never be increased nor intensified by any such sights as these.

We have spoken on a previous occasion about the absence of time and space in heaven. Nothing measurable is possible, for spirit is infinite. Our only excuse for bringing it forward now is to silence a difficulty which commonly prevails. The question is generally expressed as follows: "I feel that even in heaven, with the highest bliss conceivable, the thought that I must live a never-ending life makes my brain reel, and crushes me with a sense that I am doomed to an unutterable *ennui*."

The mistake is once again made by confusing eternity with a continuity of endless years. But such is not the case. Time does not enter into the consideration of heaven.

Let us attempt to answer the difficulty of those who are so troubled with thoughts of eternity. There is a wide-prevailing sense that finality, with the prospect of immediately entering upon a new epoch and another after that, 'ad infinitum,' is immeasurably more attractive than a breakless continuity. It is, we are told, the long, weary, infinite period of time which initiates fear.

Yes, that is true, if time and its belief as a factor in heaven is still maintained. Even in this life, however, it is possible to obliterate the sense of time over definite selected periods. Think of the religious man who, when he communes with his God, shuts out the world and all its fascinations from his enlightened soul. He often is regarded as an object of pity, if not of con-

tempt, by a wicked world, but he stands unmoved. The contemplative life is the one which lifts his soul to the highest pitch of blessedness. The pseudo-joys of earth are unthinkable as contrasted with his condition of bliss, and thus the thought of eternity has no fear for him. There can be no sense of time during these periods of contemplation. It is only when he breaks that communion at the call of some earthly task, that time once more displays itself and with it the recognition of a contaminated holiness.

Or we might approach the subject from an entirely different point of view. Let us cast our minds back over a period to some remarkable episode which, more than any other event in life, filled us with unspeakable joy. We had no doubt then that if that wonderful delight could have been extended throughout eternity, the heart would have given a decisive response. The only shadow, if any, that we experienced then was that the end was so near, which meant the passage of the event for ever, everything obliterated except its memory. It occupied our thoughts even to the present time, and how we yearn that it might be repeated, if only once again!

Think, in comparison with this, of a single heavenly event, infinitely beyond, in depth and wonder, than any of the joys of this life. There can be no shadow then, no closing of an event which has received God's sanction, because of time; but with the stupendous knowledge that in that infinitely purified and blissful condition, every faculty, sense, and attribute, will receive full satisfaction in an eternal present, brings about the fact that it would be an utter impossibility for a saint of God to even wish that any of these glorious wonders should cease.

What are these wonders? What are the activities

and felicitations of heaven? As God is infinite, so must these be, both in number and extent. We may, once again, seek the Fathers and take counsel by their evidence.

Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and the Fathers generally have thought that the immediate communion with God will be the essence of the blessedness of heaven.

Origen affirmed the progress of life in heaven, and dwelt largely on the intellectual conditions of heaven, regarding its chief joy as found in the satisfaction of the desire of knowledge.

SS. Gregory of Nazianzen and Nyssa, and others placed the felicity of heaven chiefly in the increase of knowledge and in the intercourse with the saints.

S. Augustine, agreeing with all others that the enjoyment of God is the substance of the bliss of heaven, added especially to that, the recovery of man's true liberty.

The Holy Scriptures, when carefully examined, give us a glorious picture of heaven, the final home of God's servants. They shew us the reward of the faithful, the blessedness as found in the freedom from all sin, pain and grief, the manifestation of eternal love and glory. In heaven there will be an endless experience of the realisation of hope, the possession of righteousness, the presence of the immaculate angels, the knowledge of the nearness of Christ as a Lamb that had been slain, and the vision and the fellowship of the All-Mighty God.

This Vision of God—how infinitely beyond all human contemplation! It is often spoken of as the '*beatific vision*'—the highest bliss of heaven. It is the vision of the Face of God. It is that which so fully occupies every faculty of those angels, the Seraphim, whose position is nearest to the throne of heaven. They, in

their ecstatic vision, absorb the absolute knowledge which flows from the All-Mighty Father, so much so that the grandeur of God is superlatively increased—a fact which causes heaven's angels and saints to burst forth into triumphant praise.

We, in our ordinary life, view with admiration the man whose knowledge is greatly beyond our own, and whose greatest joy is to spread it forth for the enlightenment of the nations.

But in heaven we shall worship and glorify the Triune God, the One Eternal Source of all things; and praise His Holy Name.

The adoration of the created universe is emphasised and magnified to the accompaniment of harmony and song.

With the progression of knowledge, so must the depth and fulness of the hosannas of Paradise rise to the heights of spiritual conception and unfathomable joy.

THE END

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